

UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

JAN 15 1957

SOCIAL SCIENCE
LIBRARY

WV

741

.A21

C18

*Journal
of the
Child Welfare League
of America
Inc.*

child welfare

January 1957

Using the Sociogram
in Teaching Houseparents

Selecting Boarding Homes
for Unwed Pregnant Girls

Board Member's Obligations—
Agency Standards

Increasing the Skills
of Caseworkers

Training for Houseparents

HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

CHILD WELFARE is a forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

CONTENTS

	Page
Using the Sociogram in Teaching Houseparents	1
By Alan Keith-Lucas, Ph.D.	
Selecting Boarding Homes for Unwed Pregnant Girls	8
By Lillian E. Taylor	
Editorial Comments	
The Excise Tax and Social Agencies	14
The Board Member's Obligations— Agency Standards	15
By Louis Towley	
Increasing the Skills of Caseworkers	22
By Wilma Smyth	
Training for Houseparents	27
By Eva Burmeister	
Readers' Forum	32
News from the Field	
Broadcast on Foster Homes	33
Book Notes	34
Classified Personnel Openings	35

Editorial and general office: 345 E. 46th Street, N.Y. 17, N.Y.
Published monthly except August and September by the
Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
Annual Subscription, \$4.00
3-Year Subscription, \$10.00
Individual Copies, 45 cents
Student Rates—Annual Subscription, \$2.75
2-Year Subscription, \$5.00

Copyright, Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1957

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 52-4649

VOL. XXXVI

No. 1

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Officers

Mrs. HUBERT F. FISHER, *Vice-Pres.*, Hartford, Conn.
Mrs. RANDOLPH GUGGENHEIMER, *Vice-Pres.*, New York, N.Y.
Mrs. GEORGE L. WEST, *Vice-Pres.*, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Miss LOIS WILBY, *Secretary*, Chicago, Ill.
THOMAS M. PETERS, *Treasurer*, New York, N.Y.

Board of Directors

DR. LEONA BURMEISTER, New York, N.Y.
FRANK S. BAILEY, JR., Seattle, Wash.
Mrs. RICHARD J. BERNHARD, New York, N.Y.
JUDITH JANE M. BOES, New York, N.Y.
JAMES BROWN, IV, Chicago, Ill.
Mrs. ROBERT A. BROWN, Des Moines, Iowa
Mrs. SARAH R. CALDWELL, Jackson, Miss.
Mrs. CHARLES A. CROCHER, Piedmont, Calif.
Mrs. IRVING LUDSON, St. Louis, Mo.
JESSIE GEORGE EDWARDS, Detroit, Mich.
Dr. MURIEL M. LITTL, Washington, D. C.
ALAN S. GILMER, Cleveland, Ohio
CYRIL GLIZ, Los Angeles, Calif.
JOSEPH F. HAYS, Atlanta, Ga.
Mrs. KATH. B. THOMAS, Charlottesville, Va.
LESTER L. JACOBS, Dallas, Texas
JUDITH HARRY W. LINDEMAN, Newark, N. J.
LEONARD W. MAYO, New York, N.Y.
Mrs. EDMOND J. MORAN, Darien, Conn.
ROBERT M. MULLORD, Boston, Mass.
GEORGE M. NAYLOR, Boston, Mass.
JACK N. PRITZKER, Chicago, Ill.
LEWIS J. PRITZEL, JR., St. Louis, Mo.
Dr. JULIUS B. RICHMOND, Syracuse, N.Y.
JULIUS F. ROHMAN, New York, N.Y.
WILLIAM D. SCHMIDT, Cleveland, Ohio
Mrs. J. FRAZER SMITH, Memphis, Tenn.
Dr. THOMAS M. SUGG, Northfield, Minn.
Rev. JOSEPH P. SPRINGER, Milwaukee, Wis.
JOHN G. THURAN, Washington, D. C.
Mrs. JUAN T. TRUFF, New York, N.Y.
C. ROLLIN ZANE, Hartford, Conn.

JOSEPH H. REID, *Executive Dir.*,
HELEN R. HAGAN, *Asst. Exec. Dir.*

COMMITTEES ON PUBLICATIONS
AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

JOHN G. THURAN, *Chairman*
Executive Secretary,
Family and Child Services of Washington, D. C.

Policy Committee

Mrs. RANDOLPH GUGGENHEIMER
Mr. C. ROLLIN ZANE

Advisory Committee

THELMA K. FLOWER
Executive Director, Family Services Society, Akron, Ohio
BEATRICE E. GAVAGHAN
*General Child Supervisor, Division of Child Welfare, Department
of Social Welfare, Rochester, N. Y.*
DOROTHY GILES
*Director, Children's Services, The New England Home for
Little Wanderers, Boston, Mass.*
KATHERINE E. GRIFFITH
Executive Secretary
The Diocesan Bureau of Social Service, Hartford, Conn.
AMELIA M. IGEE
*Director, Child Adoption Service of the State Charities Aid
Association, New York, N. Y.*
ADELAIDE KAISER
Director, Hillside Children's Center, Rochester, N. Y.
LECELLE LAZAR
Personnel Director
Jewish Child Care Association, New York, N. Y.
LECELLE LEWIS
Day Care Consultant
State Department of Welfare, Nashville, Tenn.
ELIZABETH G. MEIER
Associate Professor
New York School of Social Work, New York, N. Y.
ROBERT F. OYE
*Director, Division of Child Guardianship, State Department
of Welfare, Boston, Mass.*
IRVING RIMMER
Executive Director, National Publicity Council, New York, N. Y.
SUSANNE SCHULZ
*Associate Professor, School of Social Service Administration
University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.*
Mrs. LEE STANTON
Board Member, Sheltering Arms Children's Service, N. Y., N. Y.
VERNA WASKOWITZ
Division Supervisor
Family and Children's Society, Baltimore, Md.
Mrs. ALAN WIENER
*Board Member, Association for Jewish Children of Philadel-
phia, Philadelphia, Pa.*

USING THE SOCIOGRAM IN TEACHING HOUSEPARENTS

Alan Keith-Lucas, Ph.D.

Professor in the School of Social Work
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill
and Director, Group Child Care Project

The Project referred to by Dr. Keith-Lucas has as its primary function teaching houseparents on the grounds of its member institutions. The author discusses how the use of the sociogram helps houseparents become more aware of their children's problems as well as their own and gives them a feeling of the importance of their contribution to children.*

TEACHING houseparents who are taking an hour or two daily from their ever-pressing jobs is not quite the same as teaching them in a course, at an institute at a state or regional conference, or in the discussion-group type of workshop with which this particular School of Social Work has become familiar. The kind of discussion about child development that is suitable to the off-campus workshop or institute is apt, on the campus, to feel somewhat removed from the immediate problem. Discussion about the houseparent's role all too easily becomes either a set of generalizations or an attempt to struggle with immediate individual problems without sufficient knowledge of the particular campus and its particular problems and relationships. Early in the course of our new Project we found the need for some way to help the houseparent look objectively not so much at what ought to be as at what was happening between him and his children, or to his children, right here today in his own cottage, and from there to help him develop new ideas and a new orientation to his job.

How the Sociogram Works

It was at this point that we turned to a device which we had previously used as an auxiliary to studies of institutions and as illustrative material with groups of executives interested in planning the composition of cottage groups. This device—the sociogram—is essentially nothing more than a diagram showing each child's preference among his cottage mates or fellows in an

institution. These preferences properly diagrammed, however, suggest, for instance, whether the cottage has a single or a multiple leadership, whether it is an essential unity or is divided against itself, whether its structure is close-knit or basically disorganized. It can identify the most popular or the most powerful child in the cottage (and sometimes even the "snake in the grass" whose negative leadership is unsuspected) as well as those children who, for some reason, are not accepted by the group and remain as it were, "looking in." It can identify some of the rivalries in the group and can help decide, for instance, whether the strains in the cottage are between competing groups or are directed by the ruling group towards outsiders whom the group fears or rejects. One sociogram, for instance, showed unanimous rejection among a group of boys for an apparently inoffensive cottage mate who appeared on further examination (triggered by the sociogram) to present a homosexual threat.

Sociograms have long been used in sociological research and in fields such as education and public administration. They can be composed and presented in a number of different ways. The method described below represents only the one which we in the Project have, after some experimentation, found to be the most useful.

The first step is for the consultant, after having to some extent proved to the children through his relationship to them that he is to be trusted, to ask them to give him written answers to three questions. The ones we are asking at the moment are the following:

1. If the campus were flooded to a depth of ten feet and you had a boat which would hold yourself and five other people, which five would you save first?

* Sponsored by the Southeastern Conference of Workers in Children's Homes and the School of Social Work, University of North Carolina.

2. If you did not include three boys (or girls) in this cottage in your boat, add names until you have three.
3. If Mr. X (the Superintendent) came to you saying that he was going to move two children out of your cottage and would take your advice as to whom to move, whom would you suggest?

The consultant's relationship with the children and his teaching ability influence how the children answer these questions, and therefore, probably, the validity of the sociogram. Children are assured that their answers will not be used against them or shown to people whom they might hurt. We have told most groups that we are interested in various kinds of cottage composition over the country, which is true and this has seemed to satisfy. The most difficult question to which to get an answer is, of course, number 3, particularly in view of the fact that so many church-related institutions emphasize loving-kindness to the point that some children cannot admit dislikes. As a matter of fact, we have not tried this question with children under ten and even with older children we have had to work with them before they can feel comfortable about it. On the other hand some children respond to this at once.

The individual answers are then transferred to a master form. For example, in the case of the cottage mentioned above in which there was unanimous rejection of one boy, this form was filled in as follows:

Here the eight boys in the cottage are represented by the letters A to H on the left-hand side of the diagram. Boys within the group whom they would "save" are designated by upper-case P's and those whom they would like to get rid of by upper-case N's. Lower-case letters show the reaction of the other boy. Thus A chooses B, C and E and rejects D and G. C reciprocates by choosing him (forming the symbol Pp), D returns his dislike (Nn) but although he chooses B he is not chosen in return (P).

Interpreting the Answers

For the moment we will use only the left hand side of the form—the choices within the group. We start by drawing the positive sociogram. First we identify the reciprocal choices (Pp) which link A and C, A and E, B and E, B and F, and D and E. These names are then placed close together in the diagram with the bonds between them indicated by heavy lines (see Figure 1). E's position in this group is somewhat central and his name is placed at the center. He is involved in three reciprocal choosings (with A, B and D) and is also chosen by all the other boys. These one-sided choices are shown by arrows, as, for instance from F to E and D to B.

The six boys A–F can be shown to constitute a fairly close-knit group, with E as their

CHART I
Master Form for Positive and Negative Sociogram of Cottage.

Children in Cottage	Choices Within Group								Choices Outside Group				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	House- mother	Admin. Pers.	Siblings	Girls	Boys
A		P	Pp	Nn	Pp	p	Np	p			1	1	2
B			Pn	Np	Pp	Pp	N		1	2			
C	Pp	Np		p	P		Np		1		2	1	
D	Nn	Pn	P		Pp	n	Nn	p	1	1	1	1	
E	Pp	Pp	p	Pp		p	Np	p				3	
F	P	Pp		N	P		N				2		
G	Pn	n	Pn	Nn	Pn	n		Nn	1	2			
H	P	N		P	P		Nn						

ge are
e left-
in the
desig-
whom
er-case
tion of
and E
tes by
(Pp), D
ugh he
(P).

the left
thin the
positive
ciprocal
and E,
These
in the
m indi-
E's posi-
tral and
le is in-
with A,
ne other
own by
E and D
o consti-
as their

probable leader. Two boys in the cottage, G and H, however, are not chosen by any of the others. They are "isolates" and are therefore placed in the diagram at a little distance from the main group (which is also enclosed by a dotted line).

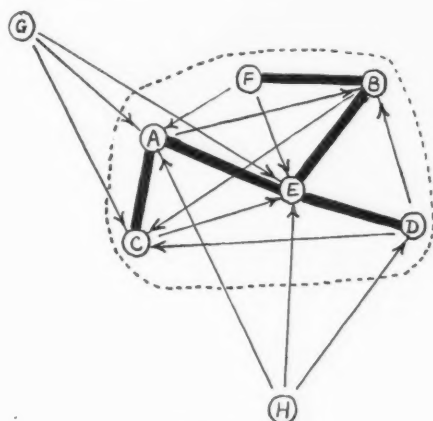


FIGURE 1.
Positive Sociogram, Cottage A.

We now can see that we have in this cottage what might be thought of as a one-centered group. There are not, as there often are, two competing leaders each with their followers. However, two boys are outside this group. We do not know at this time whether they are disliked or simply ignored by the group. To determine this we turn to the boys' negative choices, shown by the N's in Chart I.

In constructing the negative sociogram we retain the relative position of each boy in the diagram in the same place that he occupies in the positive sociogram, since a double choosing (Nn in Chart I) no longer indicates closeness but rather distance. Mutual dislikes are shown by heavy lines, one-sided rejections by lighter arrows.

The negative sociogram for this cottage is shown in Figure 2.

Here we can see at once that there is some strain within the in-group—A and D for instance have negative feelings towards each other and D is also disliked by F and B. However this is not deep enough to have divided the group. E can like and be liked by both A and D (Figure 1). What does become

immediately apparent is that the two isolates, G and H, are in a very different situation. H draws no response from the in-group. He is apparently ignored. But G draws the dislike of every single member of the cottage.

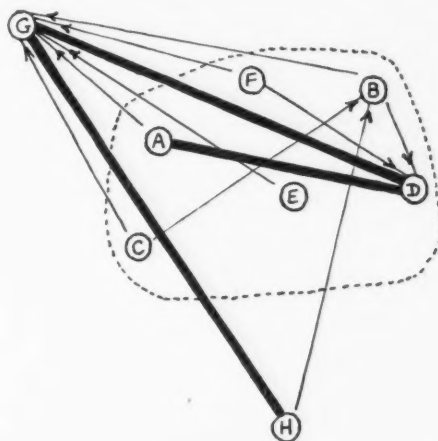


FIGURE 2.
Negative Sociogram, Cottage A.

This is, it might be said, a very simple sociogram, involving as it does only eight children. We have drawn them for as many as twenty-six, although we have few institutions in our membership who would now put so many children together.

Research Viewpoint of Sociograms

From the research point of view sociograms have many weaknesses. They are, of course, somewhat crude representations of a very vital process. They are forced to deal with something as complex as "like" and "dislike" as if these were single quantities, and can say nothing about the intensity or the quality of this feeling. The suggestion has also been made that a sociogram can only show likes and dislikes as of today. Tomorrow Jimmy, who today is friends with Jack, may have quarreled with him and a positive choice be replaced by a negative. While this may be true as regards individuals there does seem to be some evidence, however, that the basic pattern of a cottage does not change radically over a period of time, unless there is change of personnel or a real change in alignment which can be observed by other means.

Thus a divided cottage tends to remain divided, a unitary one unitary or a disorganized one disorganized, until something definite happens to change its pattern. This can be shown from the few "re-runs" that we have made and from the fact that a sociogram usually can be supported by other kinds of observation. In fact we never use them, in research or teaching, except in conjunction with other tools such as case records, houseparents' estimates of children, diaries or careful observation.

The most important thing to grasp about a sociogram as a tool in research or teaching is, however, that it asks far more questions than it answers. Although it may provide partial answers about the relationships in a group, it merely notes these relationships and does not explain them. Thus in the sociogram discussed above it points out that all the boys in the cottage would be glad to be rid of G. Why this should be so, and what the cottage parent, caseworker or administration should do about it, is an unanswered question. All the sociogram has done is to alert them to the problem.

It is, in fact, this very limitation, this ability to raise questions without supplying the whole answer, that recommended the sociogram to us as a teaching device. For this was what was wanted—something within the institution, something that touched the houseparent's daily job, something that would stimulate thought, and something that at the same time was objective and did not arise either out of a pressing problem which carried emotional overtones or out of a teacher's "theories" about what might be done.

Using "Live" Sociograms

I will not pretend that we made the decision to use "live" sociograms—that is, sociograms of the cottages headed by members of the class—without some trepidation. The very immediacy of the material might, we thought, cause houseparents to be very defensive. However, we decided to try this out and have found it helpful.

This is the method we use in teaching. In the first meeting with houseparents the na-

ture of sociograms is discussed and we look at some developed in other institutions. Houseparents are usually quick to appreciate the basic patterns, to ask questions about the children who are not preferred by any of their cottage mates, to speculate on the reasons and what the houseparent can do about them, and to begin to wonder what a sociogram of their own cottage would show. At the same time we emphasize the kind of questions that sociograms ask and demonstrate our approach to them as useful evidence rather than a basis for criticism of the houseparent. Then we say that for the next four or five afternoons the consultant will be visiting in selected cottages and will make a sociogram of that cottage which will be discussed in the next day's meeting. Generally houseparents have vied for this privilege, which we try to present as an honor.

The next day the consultant spends the afternoon in the cottage. He starts by discussing with the housemother, perhaps before the children return from school, each child in the cottage and may press the houseparent for his personal preferences (this is sometimes useful in putting the houseparent into the sociogram and dispelling fears about not being objective). For the rest of the day he plays or works with and observes the children and, at some time near the end, when he judges that his relationship is such that in general they are willing to trust him, calls them together and asks them to give him written answers to the questions given above. The same evening the consultant constructs the sociogram or sociograms and transfers them to large sheets of paper, using colors to emphasize different relationships.

These charts are then presented to the class next morning. Usually the children are not identified at first and the class exercises its knowledge of the children by "placing" them on the chart. E for instance in Figure 1 "must be Bobby Smith," because he is the most popular child and everyone loves Bobby. But E is actually Jimmy Jones, whose popularity is of a quieter sort or one that appeals to boys and not to housemothers. Bobby is actually the not too pop-

ular D. The discussion moves on with the consultant developing and guiding it as questions are asked or theories presented.

Using Sociogram in Teaching Session

The process may be understood better in considering the use to which a sociogram was put in an actual teaching session. Figure 3 is a positive sociogram of an older girls' cottage. Again, for sake of clarity, a cottage with few children in it has been chosen.

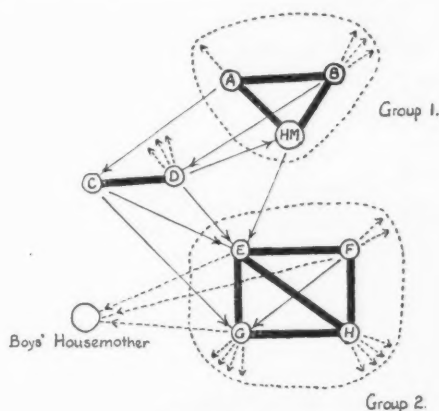


FIGURE 3.
Positive Sociogram, Cottage B.

Before considering how this sociogram was used it should be noted that it contains rather more information than that shown in Figure 1. In addition to the relationships between children in the cottage, some expression has been given to choices made outside the group. Chart II shows these choices. These are the people each girl would "save" in preference to anyone in the group.

If this be compared with the right-hand half of Figure 1, which shows the outside choices made by the eight boys in that cottage, several differences will be noted. Chief of these are the tendency of the girls to choose friends outside their cottage group and the fact that three girls chose another housemother (in this case the housemother of the boys' cottage) but did not choose their own. In fact we already have evidence that relationships in the cottage are perhaps somewhat tenuous and that some sort of a rivalry situation may exist.

To help in studying this these outside

choices are indicated by the use of dotted arrows in Figure 3 leading to the boys' housemother as in E, F and G, or simply in a direction away from the center of the group, as in Group 2—G, H and F.

CHART II
Outside Choices in a Girls' Cottage.

Girl	House-mother	Admin. Pers.	Other House-mother	Sib-lings	Boys	Other Girls
A	1	2				1
B	1					3
C				3	1	
D	1					3
E			1		2	
F			1	1		2
G			1			4
H						4

The circle representing the girls' house-mother, however, has been placed within the group rather than outside it. This is because use has been made of her preferences, as expressed to the consultant, for A, B and E, and the fact that A and B, despite instructions, used one of their three choices within the cottage group to include her and therefore chose only two cottage mates. Apparently they felt the need to emphasize their closeness to her.

A look at Figure 3 shows that this cottage is very different in organization from that shown in Figure 1. Instead of there being a central group of a more or less unified nature with one or two children "on the outside" there are here two or even three groups. One consists of A, B and the housemother, one of E, F, G and H. Between these two groups there is no direct connection, if we except the housemother's liking for E. C and D can, however, hardly be thought of as a group. Actually they seem to be two more or less isolates who were chosen by A and B because A and B's third choices had to go somewhere. They also might have chosen each other for the same reason.

This is a limitation inherent in the sociogram. To some extent the size of groups or sub-groups that it indicates depends on the number of choices each child is

asked to indicate. Thus, depending on the number of children in the cottage and the number of choices made of persons outside the cottage, the third choice may or may not indicate a vital connection. After some experimentation we arrived empirically at the use of three positive and two negative choices. More tend to produce a diagram in which groupings are not clear; fewer choices tend to miss significant relationships.

In studying this sociogram the class recognized at once that there appeared to be two sub-groups in the cottage, with one of which the housemother had identified herself. She had not only expressed her liking for A and B and they for her, but the consultant's observation had confirmed that on the day before she had spent the greater amount of her time with them. The position of C and D occasioned less comment. D was a known isolate, despite being A's sister. C had moved into the cottage three days before and obviously needed time to find her place in it.

The real question that troubled the group was how to interpret the grouping of E, F, G and H. Were they merely a group to themselves or did they have some feeling about A and B? The fact that they were slightly younger (14-15) than A and B (16-17) might suggest the first, but to counteract this was the evidence of their preference for the boys' housemother.

Resultant Discussion in Class

Discussion at this point began to do two things. It set both the boys' and the girls' housemother thinking about their roles in the group and it provided a springboard for a discussion of boy-girl relationships and their development, since the girls' preference for the boys' housemother seemed to be the outcome of two factors—her need to be popular even outside her own cottage and her more sympathetic handling of boy-girl affairs. E's unexpected position of leadership also provoked comment and some revision of feeling, particularly on the part of some of the staff who had thought about her before in somewhat negative terms because of her adolescent "silliness" and her all-engrossing love affair with a boy on campus. They began to see her in the light of a girl to whom her cottage mates looked up. This recalled the less favorable position of her boy-friend in

another sociogram—he is in fact D in Figures 1 and 2—and so to some discussion of both the psychosexual development of boys and girls and the way in which adults' and children's values may differ.

The question of whether the two groups were opposed or merely distinct was partially answered by a study of the negative sociogram.

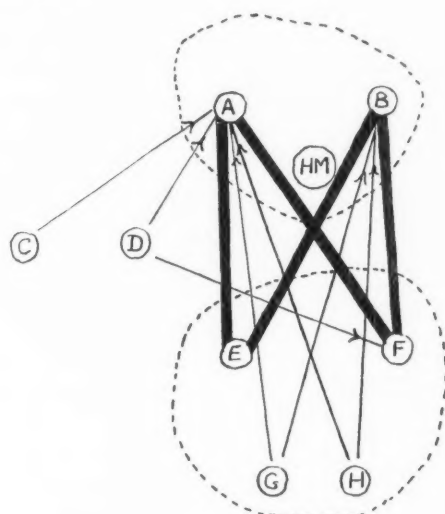


FIGURE 4.
Negative Sociogram, Cottage B.

In this diagram (Figure 4) the children are again placed in approximately the same positions as they occupy in the positive sociogram, groupings being indicated by dotted lines. The connecting lines or arrows indicate, however, mutual or one-way negative feelings. It will be noticed here that all the negative feeling goes to four girls, A, B, E and F and that these four constitute two sharply opposed groups. G and H support E and F in their rejection of A and B, and C and D are seen to be truly caught between the two groups with something of an attitude of "a plague on both your houses." D is A's sister and yet would cast her out.

With the housemother so closely identified with A and B there is therefore a real danger of the cottage developing an anti-administration group around E and F. Moreover a new problem arises in that A is leaving shortly. Where, for instance, will this leave B, who

used herself to belong to a rebel group but has only this year found acceptance for conformity through her association with A? Will she be left alone or will she try for acceptance from E and F? How can the housemother help her? Can the housemother capitalize on E's leadership and her liking for the child to win her group over? How could this be done? Can C be helped to move into the group in a constructive way? As new children are moved into the group—the cottage has a capacity of twelve—what considerations of age, temperament or grouping should be taken into account?

Summary

These are some of the questions that these sociograms can ask. Whether houseparents, and particularly those whose own cottage is not under discussion, can learn from them depends to a great degree on the teacher's skill in relationship and his ability to use these questions as a framework for more general discussion. It depends also on the quality of houseparent taught—his or her desire to learn and lack of defensiveness. Observations made by qualified persons in two institutions where this teaching method has been used have, however, brought out these encouraging comments:

1. The houseparents were vitally interested. Those whose cottages' sociograms were not constructed or discussed both regretted this fact and tried to relate their own cottage groups to the material presented.
2. The interest was long-lived and material was still being discussed some weeks later.
3. The sociograms caused the houseparents to look at individual children and at certain behavior problems in a different way. When a child proved popular whom they personally disliked they began to look for good in him. When one of their favorites proved not to be liked, they tended to re-evaluate their own and the children's scales of values and recognize differences. The fact, too, that children were being discussed other than at a time of stress enabled caseworkers and others present to share with them their knowledge of children free from the burden of immediate problem.
4. Particularly where it was possible to include the housemother in the sociogram, houseparents were able to look more objectively at the role they themselves were playing in the cottage or institutional group.
5. Houseparents became interested in future planning with regard to the group, both with individual children and with children who might be moved in.

6. The consultant was able to use the sociogram as a framework for introducing naturally, ideas about child development and staff relationships which otherwise might have seemed didactic.
7. The material did much for houseparent morale in helping the houseparent see that there was real professional content in her job which could be the subject of research and teaching. Some observers consider this perhaps the primary gain from these meetings.

We do not want to suggest, of course, that the use of sociograms is in any way the answer to the problem of teaching houseparents. We do not use it exclusively ourselves. We are very much aware that it is a tool that needs a great deal more refining before we can speak with any real confidence about its possibilities. We know already that it is not easy to use and that it demands of us the best we can put forward in terms of relationship and teaching skills. Our preliminary observations would suggest, however, that properly used it can be a useful device indeed and one that helps institutional staff focus on what is in fact the institution's major contribution to the individual—the quality of its group life.

THE NEW YORK SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Opportunities for Advanced Study Beyond the Master's Degree

FLORINA LASKER FELLOWSHIP: A \$3,000 award for the Doctor of Social Welfare degree. Applicants must possess the educational and experience qualifications required for admission to the doctoral program. Competition closes February 15, 1957.

DOCTORAL STUDY AND RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS: \$3,000 for first year of doctoral study; \$3,500 for second year of study and research on dissertation. For candidates 30 years of age or under who are permanent residents of the United States and who possess the educational qualifications required for admission to the doctoral program. Competition closes February 15, 1957.

IN ADDITION, the School recommends candidates for stipends in the field of mental health awarded by the Public Health Service for teacher traineeships and study on the 3rd and 4th year levels.

*For complete information write to
Committee on the Doctorate*

The New York School of Social Work
2 East 91st Street New York 28, N.Y.

SELECTING BOARDING HOMES FOR UNWED PREGNANT GIRLS*

Lillian E. Taylor

Program Supervisor
Women's Service Division
Family Service Bureau
United Charities of Chicago
Chicago, Ill.

The author discusses the quality of service required for the unmarried mother receiving boarding home care

ANY CONSIDERATION of criteria for the choice and use of boarding homes for the unwed pregnant girl must be based upon accepted and defined needs that such placements are expected to meet. What an agency defines as these needs becomes the very core of the function of its boarding home program and similarly determines the level of service given. Although a variety of factors have led agencies to establish boarding home care for unwed pregnant girls, all have been motivated by one basic concern—namely to offer the girl a protective shelter as a refuge from a critical society. If, however, an agency limits its concern to just this point, then it accepts a categorical approach to unmarried parenthood and does not accept the out-of-wedlock pregnant girl as a human being. But if it wants to understand the unwed pregnant girl as a personality and to consider plans for her care in terms of her own individual needs, then boarding home care must be geared to meet these needs.

Planning for this care includes a living arrangement for which the caseworker may either help the girl make a choice, or make the decision for her. If boarding home care is considered as a possible living plan, caseworker must know the diagnostic evaluation of the girl's problems and emotional needs plus the function of the boarding home, in order to provide the best plan for her. The function of the boarding home is established by the needs it is expected to meet, which can be separated broadly into the physical and emotional needs. The specifics under these two general areas of needs will be considered here since they in part determine

when boarding home care may offer an appropriate plan.

Meeting Emotional and Physical Needs

To meet the physical needs a boarding home first should offer adequate living and boarding care in keeping with acceptable standards of health and decency. Standards for diet, number of rooms in the home, sleeping arrangements, facilities for meals and recreation, etc., can be easily established. In some communities these are regulated by health, building code, and by child welfare departments of the city and state. The home also needs to provide for the physical care of a girl, who may for medical reasons, not be able to follow the regular routines. To protect the girl's welfare, there need to be regulations regarding hours for her to be in the home and plans for flexibility of rules when this is necessary. Responsibilities of the boarding home mother for supervision, clinic visits, recreational activities and confinement care should be clearly understood and a part of the formal agreement between her and the agency.

In addition to having her physical needs met, the unmarried pregnant girl needs acceptance and respect as an individual to help her face and adjust to the reality of her illegitimate pregnancy. The second major function of the boarding home then is to provide an atmosphere of acceptance and respect for the individual girl. In attempting to fulfill this latter function, agencies must utilize all of their casework experience and skills in selecting appropriate boarding home parents. In addition to the evaluation of the boarding mother's capacity to give emotional acceptance to the unmarried pregnant girl, there must be a diagnostic evaluation of the husband's personality. This will enhance our

* Given at National Conference of Social Work, St. Louis, Mo., May 1956.

understanding of the marital relationship and help us to know what attitudes he will bring to bear on the placement.

It is the boarding mother, however, who provides the primary relationship to the girl. In assessing her personality structure and defenses, the role that she must assume should be kept in mind. Because the boarding home placement is limited to the duration of the pregnancy, and post-partum care one of the qualities that we must look for in the boarding home mother is her capacity to accept the limitations of the placement so that she can relinquish the girl when it is to be terminated. She must also be an emotionally mature woman who can handle the unmarried pregnant girl's problems or situations that arise reasonably and with consistency. If the boarding mother possesses these qualities she is then able to give emotional support to the girl and to accept the limits of their relationship as defined by the casework plan. The caseworker is responsible for total planning with the girl but the boarding mother must respect the caseworker's role and have the capacity to work with her as a team. The specific grouping of girls to be placed in a given boarding home should be structured around our knowledge of the boarding mother's capacity and personality structure. There is no division between a boarding mother's ability to provide adequate physical care for the pregnant girl and to meet her emotional needs, for both are governed by her basic emotional attitude toward unmarried mothers.

An agency is responsible to the boarding mother as well as to the girl, to carefully plan a boarding home program so that the boarding mother can discharge her responsibilities with optimum satisfaction. There must be carefully thought-out and developed policies and procedures in relation to management and supervision of the boarding home. Areas and division of responsibilities between the boarding home caseworker and the client's caseworker should be carefully defined. Essential too is a structured process for determining selection of clients and homes for placement in order to serve the needs of each

girl placed. With each placement understanding of the boarding home mother should be enhanced and conversely, if the boarding home caseworker offers her a correct relationship, her scope of understanding individual differences in behavior should be broadened. At the same time we must bear in mind the limitations of a casework relationship with the boarding mother which is essentially a supportive one, and must govern the demands that we make of her through placements. If placements are made that weaken her defenses and stir up anxieties and conflict, the boarding home caseworker should offer support but cannot attempt to deal with the underlying conflicts without jeopardizing the boarding mother's entire adjustment.

Boarding Home Care for Adolescents

Within Women's Service Division it has been found that maternity homes afford the most effective form of care for a large proportion of unmarried pregnant girls, but for three particular groups boarding home care has been found more satisfactory. The first group is the young adolescent girl, sixteen years of age and under, for whom early placement is necessary if the pregnancy is to be concealed from her immediate family and community. Most maternity homes do not encourage placements that must extend beyond three months, but for the young adolescent pregnant girl a longer placement is generally an essential part of her need. Continuation of normal activities would doubtless lead to discovery of her condition, particularly to her peers. These girls are children and are in no way equipped to assume the responsibilities of motherhood nor are they capable of completely caring for themselves. Their problems cannot be separated from those of the parents whose participation in the casework plan is essential. The degree to which the parents can accept responsibility for the girl's problems and are motivated to understand the precipitating factors will determine what casework goals are set. Except for unusual circumstances these girls return to their own homes after confinement, where the attitudes of the parents may de-

termine whether direct casework therapy with the girl is to be continued.

The sexual acting out and resultant pregnancy of the adolescent girl is clearly symptomatic of conflict in the parental relationship. These conflicts have made it impossible for the girl to achieve a degree of ego integration that permits her to mature normally. With adolescence, the biological or sexual drive and the psychological drive towards emotional emancipation from the parents heighten her ungratified dependency and affectional needs. The sexual acting out is primarily an attempt on the part of the girl to gratify these basic needs. The long range casework goal for adolescents is to build up their ego strengths so that they may eventually achieve emotional maturity. This same goal obtains for the young adolescent pregnant girl, and a plan for her care during the pregnancy can offer her a living experience with a mature, healthy woman under closer supervision, which may implement casework treatment goals. Again, most maternity homes are unable to meet the needs of the young adolescent in providing this kind of environment, as their programs are geared to meet the needs of a larger and wider age-span group.

In the experience of the Women's Service Division with the use of boarding homes for the young adolescent pregnant girl, it has been found that a home that can accommodate several girls at one time allows the individual girl to develop a relationship with the boarding mother at her own pace of readiness. The nature and depth of the girl's emotional problems and her capacity to relate will largely determine the degree to which she can make constructive use of the boarding mother's help. Tantamount to this is the boarding mother's acceptance and understanding of the girl's dependency needs, but also her independent strivings. As the boarding mother conveys her acceptance to the girl, sets standards within her capacity to achieve and is consistent in her attitude and behavior, the girl may begin to incorporate standards set by this new authority. Living with other girls with similar problems,

the adolescent's feelings of difference are lessened in the boarding home setting and because it is a homogeneous group, rules and regulations concerning hours away from the home, visiting and daily schedules, can be geared better to her needs as an adolescent. The boarding home placement then is an adjunct of the casework relationship, and the relationship to the boarding mother is often the primary one for the girl. The caseworker, however, must be alert to the nature of the relationship between the boarding mother and the girl, and use this as additional diagnostic evidence in planning with the girl.

The case of Mary, age fifteen, illustrates the problems and needs of a young adolescent pregnant girl as they were manifested in the boarding home placement and the role of the boarding mother in offering a corrective experience.

The mother initiated contact with the agency to help carry out her plans for Mary and the expected baby. After confinement she saw Mary as returning to the family and "picking up where she had left off." The information obtained in the initial interviews, primarily from the mother, clearly revealed the problems in the mother-daughter relationship as related to Mary's sexual acting out.

Mary was the oldest of four siblings and had been conceived prior to her parents' marriage. Her father, only twenty-two years of age at the time, had been indecisive about marriage even though he admitted paternity. It was only out of pressure from his parents that he married Mary's mother when she was four months pregnant. The mother, seventeen years of age, had been extremely hurt and frustrated by her husband's hesitation to marry. This had necessitated her parents becoming aware of her pregnancy. The maternal grandmother had been a dominating, controlling woman who demanded strict compliance from her children and who had given approval to them only as they conformed to her standards and achieved scholastically. There was no demonstrative affection shown either between the parents or they towards their children. Mary's mother, the middle of three children, had been "swept off her feet" by her husband who was gay, funloving, and affectionate. Her affectional and dependency needs were so great that she readily acceded to her husband's demands for sexual relations after a short period of dating. Under these circumstances it was easy to see the basis for this mother's rejection of Mary, since her conception had brought further rejection and condemnation from her own parents and tremendous disappointment from a man to whom she had looked for affection and understanding.

Mary's birth had been followed in quick succession by three other siblings, the last one born when she was six years of age. With increased age Mary had to assume

responsibilities for the younger children, and while her father continued to offer a sense of warmth and understanding to her, he offered no active opposition to any of her mother's decisions. Mother expected strict conformity. Occasionally her guilt feelings over her demands of Mary for care of the younger children would prompt her to give some praise for her work. As Mary approached adolescence her mother had begun to warn her about boys and did not encourage her to have social activities with her own peers. Mary felt left out of things by her schoolmates, but because she was bright and achieved scholastically she received some attention at school for this. It was the latter that brought too the only spontaneous approval she received from her mother. The putative father of Mary's baby, a senior in high school, was the first boy to show any attention to Mary. Their dating was confined to seeing each other at school because Mary was afraid to let her mother know of her interest in the boy. However, after an acquaintance of about two months she began having sex relations with him. This occurred only on four occasions and at the insistence of the boy whom she feared losing if she did not acquiesce. Mary did not tell him about the pregnancy and obviously not her mother. However, in the third month of pregnancy her mother became suspicious, but Mary would not admit to her condition until after a medical examination. Her mother's reaction to her pregnancy was one of anger and condemnation, of the same quality to which she had been subjected when her mother had learned of her pregnancy with Mary. Her concern to have Mary out of the home and give the baby in adoption was based on her fear of the effect of this knowledge on her younger daughters and her intense anger, which made Mary intolerable to her.

Mary in the interview with the caseworker could express none of her feelings about her pregnancy or the plans her mother wanted made. She agreed only that her mother knew what was best and that she was in accord with whatever plans were made. The caseworker in discussing a boarding home placement with Mary described the home, its location and plans for her admission, but to none of this did Mary comment. On the pre-placement visit to the home Mary was generally silent and left the burden of conversation to the caseworker. Mary was accompanied to the boarding home for admission by both parents who planned with the boarding mother to visit once a week.

Adjustment in Boarding Home

In two weeks Mary had settled into the routines of the home. She was described as "bossy" by the boarding mother. Placed in the home were three other girls, aged thirteen, fifteen and sixteen. Mary formed an immediate attachment with the thirteen-year-old, whom she dominated and whose relationship with the other two girls she controlled. These girls soon resented Mary's domination of the younger girl, whom she would manipulate to prevent her participating in activities with them. Also Mary attempted to establish herself as a favorite with the boarding mother by voluntarily assuming extra tasks about the home. She would take advantage of every opportunity to create the impression with the other girls that the boarding mother favored her. No real problem was created by this until Mary recounted a shopping trip with the boarding mother and implied that the latter had taken her to lunch. Actually

they had had lunch together but each had paid for her own. The boarding mother learned of Mary's story shortly afterwards when the sixteen-year-old asked about it. She did not commit herself to a definite answer until she had learned the entire story, and after conferring with Mary alone, she persuaded her to correct her story to the other girls. In discussing the situation with Mary the boarding mother was careful to avoid accusing her of deliberate falsification, and pointed out that such an impression by the other girls would cause them to feel resentful. She discussed with Mary that they lived as a family unit, and as such it was important that each individual be treated alike so that there would be harmony. She assured Mary that she considered her as important as the others and she would not want her to feel that she played favorites. Though she attempted to help Mary set up a plan to handle the correction in a casual manner, it was not possible for Mary to carry it out in this way. Later, the boarding mother helped to alleviate some of the taunting to which Mary was subjected, for the girls accused her of deliberately lying as she had attempted to correct her story. The boarding mother suggested that they accept the fact that Mary had admitted her error which was more important than the wrong itself.

The thirteen-year-old left the home during Mary's third month of placement and for the first time she found herself without a close companion. She had continued to remain aloof from the other two girls insofar as including them in her own recreational activities though they all shared activities planned by the boarding mother. By this time Mary had become quite attached to the boarding mother, brought out to her many negative feelings towards her parents and particularly her mother. This discussion generally developed following the parents' weekly visits to the boarding home. She told of the many responsibilities she had to assume in the home and resentment over her mother's restrictions of social contacts with her own peers. To all of this the boarding mother had merely given recognition to Mary's feelings and urged that she discuss these matters with her caseworker who was concerned not only with her current adjustment but with helping her make a more satisfactory adjustment when she returned home. The boarding mother devised means by which Mary had to spend time with one or the other of the two girls and in this way gradually helped her to develop their friendship. As Mary would talk of their visits to clinic and shopping jaunts, the boarding mother would offer specific suggestions as to how she needed to share and accept suggestions from the other girls as friendship was a matter of give and take. The boarding mother continued in this role throughout the remainder of Mary's placement, giving her encouragement and permission to develop relationships with the other girls and offering specific help to achieve this when needed. She tried also to help Mary recognize her need to learn how to develop friendships with boys and the importance of knowing how to evaluate the extent of a boy's interest in her. Not knowing whether Mary would have the opportunity upon her return home to have her own friends, the boarding mother reminded her that she would have to abide by her parents' decisions in this regard until she was of age. However, she thought Mary might try to develop friends with her classmates, though her activities with them might have to be confined to school.

Casework Relationship

The casework relationship with Mary was as slow and gradual in its development as that of her adjustment in the boarding home. Her participation in the casework interviews was closely correlated with the increased security she had with the boarding mother. Only then could she reveal her intense feelings of anger towards her mother and siblings and give recognition to the fact that mother seemed to prefer the other children to her. Mary's sense of loneliness and difference from other girls her age diminished as she experienced acceptance by the fifteen- and sixteen-year-old girls in the boarding home, but were reactivated as she planned to return to her family. Mary's confidence in the caseworker had by the end of her placement been established to the point that she was eager to continue with the caseworker after her return home. Her parents had been offered a supportive relationship during the months Mary was out of the home, though neither had indicated any wish for help over and beyond help in planning for Mary. In view of this the casework goals for Mary when she returned to her family could be only tentative, since the capacity of the parents to tolerate her relationship with the caseworker was questionable.

Boarding Home Care for Older Girl

The second group for whom boarding home care has been particularly well-suited is made up of those girls where, after careful exploration, the diagnostic formulation indicates that their adjustment to their out-of-wedlock pregnancy is maintained by a strong defense against their underlying conflicts and feelings. In the main these girls have been economically independent, and their initial requests from the agency are for limited service in meeting practical needs created by their pregnancy. Often they have made a decision about plans for their expected baby but want the help of the agency in carrying out this plan. While these girls want to conceal knowledge of their situation from friends and/or relatives, they seek to have acceptance of their desire to continue their normal patterns of life insofar as their situations will allow.

A case in point is the situation of Miss Gate, age twenty-three, in her fourth month of pregnancy, who through correspondence set up plans with the agency to come from a small town in a neighboring state. In her letter she stated her wish to give the expected baby in adoption, and to secure employment where she could work as long as possible.

In the intake interview Miss Gate was well-poised and discussed her situation calmly as she kept the focus around practical planning. The only evidence that she gave of any underlying anxiety about her situation was in her profuse expressions of appreciation to the caseworker at the end of the interview after plans for her medical care and a living arrangement had been set up. The caseworker understood and accepted Miss Gate's defense as a healthy sign in that she had been able to make an adjustment to the reality of her situation. The caseworker took this into account as she considered a living plan for her care. She permitted Miss Gate to make the choice on basis of her review of the various possible arrangements and how each could or could not meet what she wanted for herself. Miss Gate chose the boarding home plan since it would allow her to resume and continue employment for as long as it was medically advisable, in addition to the fact that she preferred a family-type living arrangement.

The boarding home mother for this group of girls must be able to accept and respect their need to maintain their independence. At the same time she must offer the emotional support for which the pregnancy itself creates the need. As the boarding home mother can offer support to the girl she may gain her confidence, and the girl's defense may be lessened. In any event the caseworker's observations of the development of the relationship between the girl and the boarding home mother will add to her diagnostic understanding of the adequacy of the client's defense and the unhealthy aspects of it, if any.

Boarding Homes for Acting-out Girls

The third and last group for whom the boarding home has been found to offer the most satisfactory plan of care is the disturbed acting-out girl with severe neurotic conflicts. These girls are absorbed in their conflicts and manifest severe character disturbances. The emotional syndrome of hostility—gratification and guilt over the gratification—is an inherent part of their personality structure, and immediate gratification for their instinctual needs becomes their primary goal. Their behavior is often self-destructive, and their inadequate reality sense, plus unconscious drive to act out their conflicts, may result in very disruptive behavior. The pregnancy itself may be motivated by the unconscious conflicts with a

desire to keep the baby for the gratification that can be obtained through it.

This group of unwed pregnant girls obviously could not fit into a group setting, for their destructive behavior—both to themselves and others—would be too disruptive to a group. They need a living arrangement where their acting-out behavior can be tolerated and understood by an authoritative person who will not retaliate. The number of these girls in any one placement is necessarily limited due to the severity of their symptoms. Experience has shown they can be helped through the pregnancy with minimal upset to the girl and boarding mother, where there is only one girl in the home. Correspondingly, the emotional drain on the boarding mothers by these disturbed girls is tremendous and it would be taxing their defenses beyond capacity to ask that they cope with several such girls at a time. Needless to say, the adjustment of these girls in a boarding home is precarious, as is the caseworker's ability to hang onto them long enough to hope for any modification in the behavior patterns. Hopefully, the placement will afford enough gratification to the girl in being cared for that she can respond to the interest of the boarding mother. An agency concerned for the welfare of the girl pregnant out-of-wedlock is necessarily concerned with the welfare of her baby. The disturbed girl with neurotic conflicts may be too emotionally damaged to respond to casework therapy, but an agency concerned for her as a human being will extend its resources for her care so that planning for the baby can be done in the interest and protection of both.

Summary

In summary the agency experience with the use of boarding homes for the unwed pregnant girl reinforces the importance of a diagnostic approach. What is evolved as criteria for choice and use of boarding home care for a particular girl will be determined by the defined functions of the home and the casework plan based on a sound psychosocial diagnosis and the formulated treatment goals. These two factors must be

equally weighted in setting up any plan of care for the girl illegitimately pregnant if treatment goals are not limited to a categorical approach. The three groups for whom the agency has found boarding homes to afford the most satisfactory plan of care are:

- 1) the adolescent girl sixteen years and under,
- 2) the girl whose adjustment to her pregnancy is maintained by a strong defense against underlying conflicts and feelings, and
- 3) the disturbed acting-out girl with severe neurotic conflicts.

For these groups, understanding of their particular needs and knowledge of the boarding mother's capacity to give protection and support to implement the casework plan, are necessary components in placement consideration. It is possible that there will be found other unwed pregnant girls whose symptomatology creates needs that boarding homes are equipped to meet. These too, will be determined by casework diagnosis and formulation with boarding homes structured to meet these defined needs.

SMITH COLLEGE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL WORK A Graduate Professional School

*Programs Leading to the Degree
Master of Social Science*

Regular Curriculum (Plan A)—Three summer sessions in study on the Smith campus and two winter sessions in field work in selected agencies or clinics

Advanced Standing (Plan B)—Two summer sessions and one winter session designed for applicants who have had several years of supervised experience in an approved casework agency, or previous graduate work

Academic Year Opens June 19, 1957

Program of Advanced Study (Third Year) Leading to Diploma—To prepare for practice, supervision, and teaching

July 25, 1957 to July 23, 1958

For further information write to

THE DIRECTOR COLLEGE HALL 8
Northampton, Massachusetts

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The Excise Tax and Social Agencies

THIRTY national social welfare organizations, including the League, have joined together under the auspices of the National Social Welfare Assembly in an effort to obtain exemption from Federal excise taxes for voluntary social work agencies. Every child welfare agency expends a sizable amount from its contributed funds in payment of Federal excise taxes. These monies could be used for services to children if Congress granted some of the same exemptions that are available to local public agencies and certain voluntary organizations, including churches.

We suggest that those agencies who are in favor of such a move request their board members to discuss it with their local Congressmen. No specific bill has yet been drawn up. If widespread local support is obtained, such a bill will be introduced and we will keep you informed concerning it.

The following are excerpts from the remarks of Nicholas G. Penniman III, of Baltimore, who appeared before the Subcommittee on Excise Taxes of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives on December 6, 1956, in behalf of the national social welfare agencies.

An important element in the strength of our country is the strength of our local communities. It is in local communities that the human needs which these organizations serve are found and met. It is in local communities that the funds for these programs are given. In a real sense, these are local community self-help programs tied together and unified through national organizations. Quite apart from the direct and indirect benefits which are derived from the services themselves, our local communities are strengthened also by the very fact that millions of citizens are inspired and enabled to give voluntary service to their fellow men through these organizations. It has been well said that rich as it is, the United States could not afford to buy the time and talent which such organizations secure each year from the volunteers associated with them.

One of the anomalies of the situation is that parts of the tax-deductible contributions which they receive are used by such organizations to pay excise taxes. They pay manufacturers' excise taxes on the automobiles, trucks, tires, tubes and automotive parts which they use in

their operations. Many, such as children's homes and day nurseries, pay similar taxes on a long list of household-type appliances such as water heaters and refrigerators.

Every organization pays taxes on typewriters, adding and mimeograph machines and similar items of office equipment. Among voluntary community service organizations, only the American National Red Cross is exempt from the payment of the tax on telephone and telegraph service and on rail and air tickets for staff travel. With some exceptions organizations collect and pay over to the United States Treasury admission taxes on tickets for events and benefits which they conduct.

We would call attention to the fact that the Federal government is already set up to administer exemptions from a number of these taxes for the benefit of state and local government and the Red Cross. Thus, presumably, no new administrative machinery would be needed if these exemptions were extended to other tax exempt organizations.

We respectfully suggest that the public interest would be served if the Subcommittee were to give serious consideration to the advisability of revising present excise tax policy as it affects such community service organizations. We stand ready to assist the Subcommittee in any study of this matter which it may undertake. Thank you.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The basic **Two-Year Graduate Curriculum** in social casework or social group work prepares for professional social work practice in all fields. It leads to the degree of Master of Social Work.

The **Advanced Curriculum** offers to qualified persons who hold a Master's degree in social work an advanced, third year of graduate professional education in social casework, group work, welfare organization, supervision, administration, teaching, or research. This curriculum leads to the Advanced Certificate.

The **Doctoral Curriculum** for candidates for the degree of Doctor of Social Work includes, and continues beyond, the Advanced Curriculum in any one of its specializations.

Fellowships are available to students in all curricula.

Address all inquiries to:

(MISS) MARGARET E. BISHOP

Director of Admissions and Placement

School of Social Work

University of Pennsylvania

2410 Pine Street, Philadelphia 3, Pa.

THE BOARD MEMBER'S OBLIGATION— AGENCY STANDARDS*

Louis Towley

Professor of Social Work
George Warren Brown
School of Social Work
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri

In this article the writer sketches a concept of board function and performance in which the board consciously studies its own role in complement to staff's role.

THE SOCIAL agency is distinguished by the fact that it exists to provide a professional service given by people who are not a part of the legal entity of the agency. This quite common situation becomes unusual in the social agency when it is realized that the citizen board must promulgate policy for the professional staff—or so the theory runs; and further, that this extraordinary concept, although across the grain of most professions, brought social work into being as a profession.

The profession, I dare say, has reached its majority and is emancipated by this time, but in voluntary and many public settings, it has not flown the nest. It has chosen a partnership, for various reasons, and it has thus solved many problems—and created others, some of which stem from the appropriate roles of the partners.

The partnership has its disparate elements, possibly more numerous than the common elements; but it is clear that the latter far outweigh the disparities. It is not just futile cataloging to suggest a few of both kinds of characteristics.

Here are some of the ways in which board and staff tend to be different. I say to start with that these are relatively unimportant, but if they are summed up, they reflect a distinct kind of community status.

Board and Social Worker—Differences

Board members have lived quite a long time in the community; but if they are fairly recent arrivals, they plan to stay. They send

their roots down into the community and most of these roots have been there a generation or more. They are solid citizens. That's why they are sought for the board.

Board members are home owners, mostly, and many of them even own their homes free of mortgage. This makes them "taxpayers" in that most sacred sense of the word, meaning payers of real property and homestead tax. (The homestead taxpayer gains a ripe and unique respectability unequaled by any other kind of taxpayer.)

Board members have "leisure" of one kind or another, or they would not be able to afford to volunteer their time to a social agency. For almost all of them the leisure is stolen from their professional, business, or homemaking life, but obligation or a sense of civic duty persuades them to make this sacrifice. Some board members perhaps may have an overplus of leisure, but as most boards go, these members are few indeed.

Women board members are rarely what are commonly referred to as "career women,"—that is, they do not make their own living at a job that has won the name career. The fact that board service may also be a career has not been widely recognized, probably because it is volunteered and earns no money.

The men on the board are quite often distinguished in their own profession or business, as are many of the women for their civic achievements, if not in other ways. On the board, however, all of these people play a role in which their distinguished attainments are shelved, as they place themselves on an artificial par of common function to which each brings his peculiar talents and

* Given at the Child Welfare League Section, National Conference of Social Work, May 1956.

competence and tries to leave his distinction at home.

All board members without exception are successful people. Failures are not found on boards.

All board members are "influential" in one sense or another—possibly recognized leaders, possibly what is frequently referred to as natural leaders. This means inconspicuous leadership.

As distinct from influence, board members have what goes under the name status or prestige or "position." This is a tenuous, ill-defined, rather mysterious attribute that is rarely achieved as a goal but is always acquired as a by-product of other achievement and success.

The social worker is not characterized equally by the reverse of these qualities describing the typical board member; but the tendency is for the social worker to have less of these attainments.

The majority of social workers are not native-born to the community where they work, and are frequently not long-time residents. They move too often to become rooted.

A rather small percentage of social workers are home owners, unless indeed they marry a home owner. The rest of them, if they do own a home, usually have only an equity. It is not that social workers lack the natural desire to have roots and a home of their own, but they do move a great deal and as for salaries—board members can answer the question for themselves.

Social workers have as much leisure time as any other professional person, but in the money to indulge their leisure they are a little less fortunate.

The women in social work are with few exceptions what might be called career women, not always with the conventional connotations of the phrase.

There are many social workers of distinction, but the distinction is of a kind more widely recognized in the social work community (which is national) than in the common, local community.

Most social workers are successful, or they would not stay in the profession; but again

their success is not the kind that wins wide recognition except in the social work community.

Some social workers have influence, but the influence tends to be of the professional type rather than the civic variety.

As to community status, prestige, "position," social workers must be content with a varying degree of this tenuous quality. I believe that the status given the social worker by the board is the highest status that a social worker has. Therefore, board members may best answer this themselves.

Qualities in Common

This personal view of the disparities between the two partners in the social agency enterprise sounds more formidable than it really is, because the sum of the differences is far outweighed by even a few of the elements board and staff have in common.

Board and staff combine, in their devotion to the agency's purpose, the object of its service. They have a concern for the people served. Each has a degree of selflessness, directed and disciplined in different ways toward substantially the same ultimate end. They have in common intelligence, good motivation, integrity, frankness, and a spirit of inquiry. In common also are a high regard for a fact as such; a willingness to experiment; and an obligation to stand as advocate of unpopular and neglected members of the community. (Both board and staff wish to help these people enjoy their rights as human beings and find a better place in the community.) Board and staff also share an optimistic point of view in the sense that both believe it is worth taking action in the face of discouragement. Both believe in cooperation and working together, and they consistently see their efforts mobilizing unexpectedly large proportions of the community toward the purpose identified by the agency and personified by that agency.

Such elements in common erase differences by finding and standing on the common ground of strength and endeavor. Now let me suggest the premise for much of what follows.

Staff Must Look to Its Profession

A first requisite for the colleague board is sound and knowledgeable recognition of the professional character of the service and of the staff. This recognition must be of a character and integrity that will allow the board to transcend the conventional attitude of the employer toward the employee. This is true, even, I reluctantly add, where the employee invites the conventional attitude. *Staff must be held to its professional character.* The importance of this point needs explanation.

Social work is one of the very few professions whose mode of practice is not private but institutionalized in an employment pattern. This has been the pattern from inception and it constantly raises risks of vitiating the professional decision. In one sense, employed status has held the profession back. For example, a code of ethics was a long time developing in acceptable form.

A lawyer of long and thoughtful experience in a social agency has this comment:

"It is not for the acting executive, I think, to make policy but to derive policy formulations from the operations of the professional disciplines within the agency. The professional staff should develop agency position and draft the agency's texts.

"No doubt social work is misconceived because of its institutional involvement, but this would be as true of any other profession. It takes a broad background of private practice to dispel the illusions one gets from seeing the function only in institutional dress; for it is in the broad fields of private practice that a profession builds the sure foundation of its professional ethic and discovers also the empirical answers to the sixty-four-dollar question as to what course of action its ethical standards require."¹

I ask a difficult thing. I ask that the board—the institutional entity, mind you—call staff and hold staff to the professional function and standards.

Such a board attitude would help staff achieve a professional character and point of view that is in no way depreciated by employed status but on the contrary wears such status as a plume, as a cachet. After all, it means community authorization. The means of achieving this improbable point of view—

¹ Smith, A. Delafield, *The Right to Life*, The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1955. P. 177.

and it is well for boards to understand it—is summed up by a figure of speech: staff must have its center of gravity, its equilibrium, not in the employer but in the professional principles and concepts.

Staff achieves this obvious and simple requirement in many ways, one of which is by looking to its professional association in many questions of policy and guidance; to professional associates for consultation in matters of technical judgment; to standard-setting agencies, like the Child Welfare League of America, on program guidance.

Implications for the Employing Board

It would be well for board to know something of social work principles and concepts, the professional character, in a brief, condensed, generic form. Staff should be able to supply to every board member a short, very brief bibliography of these basic facts. One of the best of the cornerstones I would suggest is the National Association of Social Workers' statement on "Standards for the Professional Practice of Social Work." It contains the Code of Ethics, a statement on Personnel Standards and Practices, and a statement on Civil Rights in Social Work. (It helps to talk each other's language, understand one another's principles.)

Though staff necessarily looks to its professional principles, to its professional association, to its professional character, this does *not* depreciate board but offers board the opportunity to play a more knowledgeable role in the agency partnership. It means, of course, that the board is not an absolute monarchy even though it is an employer. It is a limited monarchy and its strength is to be found in the proper use of that limitation. But the board must not kneel, even though it bows, to the profession of social work. Let there be no white-tower professionalism.

Implications for Staff

The implications for staff in this general point of view are difficult for an employee to carry out. The staff must put its board in second place. This is not the usual way of looking at an employer, unless covertly. It

must be, and it can be, quite frank, though unspoken, because board itself knows the necessity, knows the ground rules, and plays its role in the light of this knowledge.

Staff must recognize the board's position, necessities, and sanctions. The board is the legal entity of the agency. The board members are the sponsors of the service; they represent the authorizing and the supporting community. On one hand they represent the expectation in the area of service; on the other they sponsor the staff. Keeping a watching brief, board can let professional principles and precepts take precedence over implementing the service, unless there are unusual circumstances.

The board is accountable to the community, and staff must never forget this almost controlling fact. The board's judgment, though it may on occasion defer to the professional judgment, does not thereby have less weight. Indeed it is frequently a countervailing weight that modifies the professional judgment fruitfully and beneficially. This I consider not only necessary but proper. Board judgment is the tempering community denominator—and I do not say common denominator.

Some professional decisions need tempering by community view. An example almost at random is: staff frequently wishes to close intake because of staff limitation and the need to keep the caseworker load down to the point where a high standard of work can be achieved. Every person in any profession can sympathize with this wish and would affirm it. But the situation in the community may be such as to require that the service given be adjusted temporarily to a less intense, less adequate level to permit a moderate service to more cases. Professional standards are not clear on this point and I rather think that board judgment to compromise is as availing as staff judgment to give all or nothing. Other professions conceive of first-aid, stop-gap measures in emergencies.

I have discussed here the main basic seasoning of the social agency broth: the differences between board and staff characteristics; the common elements that outweigh

the differences; and the all-together proper need for staff to look to its professional association, its principles, its concepts and standards. I have modified my premise by suggesting a few of the implications of this basic fact for the board and for the staff.

If this could be achieved, then the groundwork would be laid for an active, exacting board in partnership with a staff that would inevitably be performing on a higher professional level. I wish now to proceed to other observations on board functions and activities.

Board Decision

Most obviously the board has to make important agency decisions, or agency actions simply do not have sanction or legality. This means that proposals must be approved or disapproved. Such proposals are not only of board origination but may come from the staff. Decisions tend to be either "community" decisions or "professional" decisions. How much of this decision-making, (hopefully with the study that sometimes precedes decision), is pro forma action or simple rote motion? Some of it must be matter-of-course action, and undoubtedly *should* be in the interest of saving time. This is particularly true when a given proposal is fully understood by the board and it meets all of the board's criteria of a wise proposal without undue negative side effects. But many decisions not in that category are made without full understanding. (I intend no reflection on board grasp or understanding. It is a reflection on the degree of attention paid to detail of this nature and the type of supporting background information adduced to give perspective to a proposal.)

I have assumed in the foregoing assertions that most professional proposals originate in staff, but I suggest to you that not all of them should so originate.

The board has the right, and I should hope the obligation, to initiate many proposals, including some of a so-called "professional" nature. It would be quite a test of both board and staff. Let me suggest a few activities possibly and with propriety within

board initiation. All of these have precedent in various agencies, though not always with obligations entailed.

1. Evaluation of performance is considered to be a professional duty and in the best professional behavior it is periodic if not constant. This evaluation, however, is not always on an overall agency basis; yet this is precisely an area where the board has some competence and a high degree of interest and responsibility. Furthermore, the board has the capacity to view this overall agency performance against an unusually good insight into community expectations, satisfactions, and disappointments.

Board might well take the initiative in this activity, and play an appropriate responsible part as both evaluator and the object of evaluation. Self-evaluation by a board is wholesome.

2. If the cause of non-performance is remediable, it is requisite that board proceed forthwith to remedy the matter. Staff can rarely take the initiative here, except as the cause lies within the staff alone, and even in this respect the board might question staff function or a change in personnel. Possibly it might be wise to initiate study of the entire situation in an effort to discover a recourse not obvious. For example, has the agency unconsciously been carrying out an undeclared function?

This happens oftener than we are willing to admit and it is not a bad way for a new function to come into being, because it is almost always in response to a need which is met through a present though unrecognized competence.

3. An agency's finances are an inescapable reality. They have been dealt with in detail by many experts. Here I wish only to identify one step that the board can take with far better grace than the staff. Finances will never be adequate and cannot approach adequacy unless someone fights for them, logically and on the basis of fact. I think this is preeminently a board function, simply because, for most social agencies, salary is involved in a substantial part of the agency's financial problem, staff problem, and the whole range of its service. Staff is humanly reluctant to raise this matter because of the degree of its self-interest.

Undoubtedly, because of this fact, when staff is pushed to take the initiative for more adequate compensation, a degree of emotion enters into the matter and the whole relationship skates very close to the thin ice of antagonism and hostility. The matter will

arise in any event, and it makes for a far greater understanding and mutual confidence if board takes the early initiative and is not quickly discouraged.

4. Social policy is one agency function seldom given anything except sporadic attention. This is regrettable because it is an activity that multiplies the agency's resources and is essentially preventive in its long-time impact. Social policy should be influenced, so far as competence justifies, by those who know most about the results of social policy—positives and negatives. If the social agency does not have this competence, or does not develop it, social policy will be made without the contribution of those who know most about it. I go so far as to suggest that a standing committee of a board should deal with it through the most able and interested board members who can be found to serve. It would be well to have a staff committee advisory to this board committee in order to get a pooled judgment, but on balance I think board carries more weight among social policy-makers than would staff members.

The reasons go back to the status in the community of the two. But there is no loss in prestige of contribution by the staff, if staff ideas and ability are reflected in the board's social policy decisions.

5. Self-organization is one of the most usual and obvious areas of board initiation. Let me emphasize one of the most frequent rules: everyone on the board should be used on a job for which he has special ability or experience. Meetings must be kept democratic. Any kind of sub rosa inner-circle raises a serious question. The board must police itself, the conduct of its meetings, its attendance, the level of its overall performance. And above all, I believe the board must avoid allowing the staff or any part of the staff to run it, dictate to it, or have undue influence upon it, except on the basis of openly discussed facts and sharing of viewpoint.

Board and staff alike should achieve a self-esteem that will strengthen them in the cooperative venture.

6. An aspect of self-organization is found in the board's plan to replace itself. This is a matter to be taken seriously. It is no longer considered respectable or responsible for board to embalm itself in lifetime memberships.

Replacement of itself starts with a nominating committee—the seedbed, or perhaps planter is the better word, of the future board. This is the committee that grafts the strain that will facilitate or limit the board's potential for the coming years. Such a committee will consider the suggestions that have been accumulating over years of experi-

ence; ways of identifying good board timber; ways of testing individuals; ways of orienting them before they are seriously approached for nomination; and the best ways of inducting the new board member to a quick and fruitful and satisfying board experience.

In this connection I wonder if any agency at the present time inducts new board members with what might be called an "undertaking of office." A factual unemotional declaration of this sort might emphasize a dimension of dignity and service already present but not always explicit in board concerns.

7. It is board's obligation to initiate the establishment and constant review of long-time goals, with a blueprint or time schedule for attainment of sub-goals leading to the larger accomplishment. This device is helpful in keeping a perspective. It would show whether an agency is on a plateau of a year-by-year life, interrupted perhaps by monthly meetings. A term of board service is only a short time in any agency's life and it is quite human of the individual board member to think of the agency only in the light of his own term of office. A long-time plan or blueprint will help every board member see his identification with the agency at a given point or period in its long history and its hopes and dreams for the future.

It might help to impel many board members to plan more for the future; and it would relieve them of the need to find all their satisfaction from the month-to-month or yearly achievement.

Agency Sovereignty

May I return to an assertion made earlier, in order to extend it somewhat.

The premise established for the point of view I have attempted to sketch runs the risk of board's deferring to staff's professional frame of reference or center of gravity more than is necessary or wise. Board must exercise a discriminating judgment, informed by facts and by good will, with a nice balance between the community facts and the professional factors, if the two do not coincide. With careful, unremitting attention to this matter, the board will not abdicate its prerogatives to staff but will rather be strengthened in urging a tempered professional point of view.

This offers a particular strength in a matter of some present urgency and moment: the

relationship between the central planning and the joint fund-raising agencies of a community and a member agency. The advantages and the necessity of coordinated effort are basic to our present state of healthy development, and one can credit central planning and joint fund-raising with much of this development. But it is regrettably possible to sense, sometimes to identify, instances where agencies have carried the necessary allocation of powers and control to the central bodies beyond the point of necessity. This could bring about a different kind of abdication, an unhappy and unnecessary abdication of agency prerogative—even agency sovereignty. Where it occurs this is an impropriety. Through apathy or by misunderstanding, agencies have allowed their initiative to be stifled; and the vital sense of agency independence, from which comes a high level of board service and staff performance, has been curtailed beyond the need of required coordination in the social work community.

It is my belief that a greater sense of common cause between board and staff, finding the vantage point in professional standards adjusted to the board's view of community expectation and authority, would enable agencies to be more secure and highly aware of their right of independent initiative and areas of autonomy. To put it rather extravagantly, it would allow agencies to be responsibly and quite respectfully more of a problem than they now are to Council and Chest and United Fund.

In Conclusion

In this partnership between board and staff, the board yields precedence in some decisions, asserts its always residual precedence in others; does not strain at a gnat while swallowing a camel; does not waste undue time on pro forma decisions but knows when the matter-of-course decision is proper; exerts initiative without hesitation; and welcomes staff initiation. The net decision in many of these situations is rarely wholly "professional" rarely "non-professional." It is usually a modulated joint decision that has

regard to both points of view, with both modifying their prerogatives. In sum, board must be a goad and a support to staff, just as the agency must be to the community.

This is the colleague's role, as I see it, and woe betide a staff member who cannot achieve his own side of the colleague's role.

Such a partnership, in any agency that has a board, would help save the social work staff from the risk of indulging in ivory tower professionalism, the kind of professionalism that cultivates a stale, self-perpetuating, test-tube existence, and lacks touch with the community and with the standards of community expectation.

Agencies of the kind I have tried to sketch are not mere imagination. They exist. They offer an opportunity for board service of infinite satisfaction to every member. They make of social agency board service a place where one can contribute; an activity in which one is valued for his particular competence; where contribution is out of strength and not weakness. And for staff members, these agencies are magnificent places to practice the profession of social work.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Southwest Regional Conference

February 7, 8, 9

Hotel Baker, Dallas, Tex.

Chairman: Miss Lou-Eva Longan, Executive Director
The Children's Bureau
Dallas, Tex.

Eastern Regional Conference

February 14, 15, 16

Sheraton-McAlpin Hotel, New York, N. Y.

Chairman: Robert Shulman, Chief, Child Welfare
State Department of Social Welfare
New York, N. Y.

New Midwest Regional Chairman

Miss Margaret Winchell, Executive Director, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, has been elected Chairman of the Midwest Regional Conference, 1957, to replace Paul Nolte who is moving to the West Coast.

The George Warren Brown School of Social Work

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

St. Louis 5, Missouri

A two-year graduate curriculum leading to the professional degree.

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Child Welfare is one of eight fields of specialization open to the student in the second year, following a first year of generic content. Supervised field practice afforded in both public and private agencies.

Scholarships or training grants usually available for the qualified applicant.

DOCTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

A post-graduate professional curriculum with a research orientation.

Early inquiry and application is advised.

For information, write to The Dean.

University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

Pittsburgh 13, Pa.



PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

for men and women

*Leading to the Master of Social Work and
to the Doctor of Social Work Degrees*

The Master's Degree may be earned with either the *Work-Study Program* (Plan A) or the 2 year *full-time Program* (Plan B)

The Doctorate program emphasizes teaching, research and administration

INCREASING THE SKILLS OF CASEWORKERS*

Wilma Smyth

Child Welfare Supervisor
Montana State Department of
Public Welfare, Great Falls

In their efforts to offset the difficulties created by staff shortages, the Montana Welfare Department sought to increase the skills of its caseworkers in order to make their contributions more effective.

IN MONTANA many of our problems, most of our successes, and virtually all the things that we do are related to the big, beautiful, sparsely populated country in which we live and work. The population of about 600,000, or a little less than the Portland metropolitan area, is scattered over the third largest state in the nation. Even our vocabulary, or perhaps the use which we make of the vocabulary, is different from the thickly populated coastal areas. To us, a city is a town of about 40,000, or approximately the size of Salem, Oregon. A small county to us is one in which the Welfare Department has only one worker. One of these "small" counties, however, has the second largest area of any county in the United States. The worker there goes north from the County Seat of Dillon into the Big Hole, a distance of 75 miles, and from there may continue another 35 miles to visit a client. Another day, he will go south 100 miles into the Centennial Valley. Perhaps another day he will have less travel and will go only about 70 miles into Horse Prairie. Those of you who have visited us during vacations will have memories of this country which I could never put into words.

Like the country in which we work, our area of responsibility is also large. We have few private agencies, and the Division of Child Welfare Services, through county welfare departments, assumes responsibility for protective services; child placement, including boarding homes, adoption and institutional placement; services to unmarried mothers; and casework services to parents and to children in their own homes. Only eight of our fifty-six counties have the services of a child welfare worker. In other coun-

ties the work is done by public assistance staff. To carry out our broad responsibilities and to give effective service to the children in all of our counties, in spite of staff shortages, is a never-ending challenge to all of us.

The problem of staff shortages can be approached in many ways. We can attempt to recruit more and better trained staff. We can try to develop working conditions, personnel practices, and professional satisfactions on the job which will result in our staff staying with us longer. We can attempt to increase the effectiveness of the staff that we have. All of these approaches are important, but I shall discuss only the latter and describe some of the things which we are doing to help our staff improve their skills, and also to gear our agency operation to make the best use of the skills which the staff has.

The Unit Plan

In each of the three largest counties we have developed casework units which may be a unique approach to the problem. Since supervision of the public assistance staff had been largely through untrained, but experienced persons and since child welfare services was staffed by trained people with limited experience, an integration of the two divisions on the local level was initiated.

The county supervisor title was eliminated and county administrator took its place. The position of casework supervisor was created with minimum requirements of a Master's degree and two years of supervisory experience. The administrator retained responsibility for total agency operation while the casework supervisor assumed direct supervision of the casework under the general direction of the administrator. Child welfare workers were used in supervising workers

* Given at Northwest Regional Conference, Portland, Oregon, April 1956.

carrying ADC case loads. The casework supervisor gave the child welfare workers direct supervision on their casework and their supervisory responsibilities. He also gave direct supervision to two ADC workers and a worker carrying an undifferentiated load but who needed special help. Thus, the aim is to have all family cases carried by workers who are supervised by trained people.

In situations where, because of lack of staff, trained supervision was not available, consultation with the casework supervisor was made available. Conferences on case problems can be initiated by the worker, his supervisor, or the casework supervisor. A special time is set aside each week for consultation. This was an attempt to circumvent the problem of trying to impart casework knowledge to a worker through an untrained supervisor whose lack of casework knowledge created difficulties in bringing increased understanding directly to the worker.

Staff development meetings, which are planned by a staff committee, are an important part of the unit plan. Methods of applying theory are emphasized, as are the bonds common to all in the public welfare field. Through group participation common doubts are aired and dispelled and a feeling of "oneness" takes their place.

The most obvious advantage of the unit plan is that it brings the special knowledge of our trained workers to bear on a larger number of cases. It also gives all staff a chance to develop professionally to their maximum potential. The inexperienced and untrained worker gains a concept of this thing called "casework," along with carefully planned help in developing the necessary skills. The trained worker benefits by having carefully planned and guided experience in supervision comparatively early in his professional career. This close working together on the local level has virtually eliminated the rivalry which we used to see between public assistance and child welfare staff in the larger counties.

Problems in this integration called the "unit," center chiefly around the split functions of the trained supervisory staff. Direct

supervisory responsibility to some workers and indirect services to others means a constant change of pace or focus. Hopefully, in the near future public assistance will be able to offer a better-trained supervisory staff.

Group Meetings for Staff Development

To improve the skills of staff in our smaller counties, we have been experimenting with small group meetings. In twenty-seven, or approximately one-half of our fifty-six counties, the Department has only one worker who carries the total casework and administrative responsibility for the county. The only persons with whom this "lone" social worker can share his professional problems are the public assistance supervisors and child welfare consultants from state office. If the worker has no regular contact with others working in the same capacity, his problems and his inadequacies may seem to him to be unique.

Our workers have wanted the opportunity to test their ideas against those of other workers who had the same problems and responsibilities. They have also wanted a staff development program through which they could learn more about their multifunction jobs which have elements of casework, administration, and community organization. In response to these demands small monthly group meetings have grown up in three areas of the state. Organization and content differ, but the content and method of presentation are always geared to the expressed needs of the workers. In each instance there has been very careful advance planning.

Workers who express a desire for such meetings have been encouraged, but have been given the responsibility for defining the kinds of meetings they want, their aims and frequency. Plans have been kept flexible so that the program of the meeting can change with the change in workers' needs. For instance, as one worker put it: "We don't want a lot of theory. We want something practical to use in helping Mrs. Jones raise her kids." It was therefore agreed that the workers would present cases with which they

wanted help. In each case, casework and administrative and community organization aspects were thoroughly explored. The child welfare consultant brought out the typical reactions of clients and how their individual backgrounds and experiences affected their reactions. Similarities and differences in case situations were noted. Each meeting of this group included a progress report on cases which had been discussed previously. This gave the workers a chance to see the results of plans and the accuracy of the predictions made by the group. After the first three meetings the worker who had not wanted "a lot of theory" commented:

"There seem to be some general principles here that are running through many of our cases. At the next meeting, couldn't someone summarize what we've learned so we could take notes and have them to refer to?"

We did then summarize in rather academic terms, with numerous points which had been made and were illustrated in the cases. The basic theory became acceptable to the group because its applicability had already been proven.

At first most workers were understandably fearful of exposing themselves to the possible criticism of the group, especially when they were not previously acquainted with some of the group members. The supervisory staff can be most helpful here in focusing on the positive aspects of the worker's performance, even in a situation which is essentially negative.

One worker presented a case which seemed hopeless to her and in which she had been overlooking the mother's very real strengths. She concluded, "The trouble is I just don't like this woman." The worker was very quickly commended for her accurate diagnosis of a major problem in the casework relationship, as well as for her progress in self-awareness. Having received credit for identifying the problem, she did not need to deny her negative feelings or to be defensive about them and was then able to accept help in dealing with her own feelings.

Participation in the group process by which we pool our efforts to find solutions to our common problems has shown quick results in better inter-county relationships, better supervisor-supervisee relationships, and in-

creased ability of workers to evaluate and change their own casework techniques.

Importance of Supervision

The units and the group meetings are perhaps easiest to identify and describe as devices for increasing the skills and effectiveness of our staff. Of even greater importance, however, is the over-all quality of supervision and the way the supervisor feels about the worker and hence helps the worker to feel about himself. Believing that no supervision is preferable to poor supervision, we have left some districts vacant for a time rather than to employ poorly-qualified people or to spread existing staff impossibly thin. The supervisor must have a sincere appreciation for the contribution of each worker to the total program. He must also be able to judge accurately what kinds of service each is capable of giving so that he can set goals which leave the worker feeling challenged but not overwhelmed.

The value of full professional training for all staff is unquestioned, but we must be ready to recognize the skills and abilities of all our workers, and ready to help each worker develop to the limit of his own capacity.

Many of our child welfare service cases are carried by workers without social work training, and some of these have done an amazingly good job.

Janie, for instance, was an extremely upset little girl of nine, who did her best to mother her three younger brothers and sisters. Their own mother had made it clear to them that she did not want them. Finally, Janie told the worker in front of the children that she was "sick of those kids and ready to let somebody else take care of them."

A larger agency, confronted with the many problems which these children showed, would have assigned the case to one of its more highly skilled workers. In Janie's county, however, there is just one worker, a warm understanding woman, who loves children, but who had no professional training. The supervisor helped her understand that these children felt hurt and distrusted all grownups. This was at the root of some of their prob-

lems, with which they would need help before they could form new parental ties.

Janie came to the office at least once a week after school and seemed to be wanting to say something that she could not, so the worker let her play with the typewriter and the stapler, which got an awful lot of banging, and draw with the red and green pencil. Sometimes Janie would talk and sometimes she wouldn't. After a while the words began to come and, through the play and the words, Janie was able to bring out her feelings enough to become a happy little daughter to her new mother and daddy.

Many things contributed to the caseworker's ability to help Janie—the most important being her own warm understanding and intelligence. Also important was the supervisor's belief in her as a person who could help this child, which in turn, gave her the courage to try, even in an area where she realized that her knowledge was limited.

Agency Must Determine Priorities

In addition to helping our workers to do things, we must also stand ready to help them decide what not to do. This is easy for us when a worker wants to attempt something far beyond his skills. It is less easy when the worker is beset by an impossible volume of work, all within his competence, and all important.

When, because of staff shortages, an agency cannot do the total job, it is the responsibility of the administration to determine priorities. If the administration does not assume responsibility for determining the priorities, then the supervisor must do this with his workers. All too often we tell the worker in a vague sort of way to do as much as he can of an impossible job. This is not only unfair to the worker, but interferes with his best functioning on the job. When he neglects important things we may blame him, or possibly excuse him because he had too much to do anyway. The blame is obviously unjust, and the excuse is little better because it leaves the worker with a feeling of failure, although he may have been "forgiven." Worker and supervisor should decide together, in advance, on the realistic limits of the job to be done. If the supervisor's expectations of the worker

are reasonable, then he can, and should hold him accountable for achieving these goals.

While we are considering improving the skills of workers, perhaps we should also think of using the skills which our workers already have, not only in the casework field, but also in many other fields which are useful to our agencies. We agree that this is important, but often fail to apply the principle. When some of our workers needed more information about the state school for the feeble-minded and found it difficult to help parents to use this resource for their children, we used one of our caseworkers who had formerly taught at the school to give other workers the information on the homely details of school living, which means so much to a parent who is about to part with his child. The knowledge of staff as to how program affects people is used from time to time by our Manual Committees where county workers participate with state staff in writing policy and procedure.

In larger counties, many speaking engagements normally filled by an administrator can be assumed as well or better by a caseworker or supervisor. This seems particularly true of the high school career days where we find that our best recruiting is done by attractive young workers whose appearance and behavior girls might wish to emulate.

Do Workers Have Unnecessary Duties?

True, this means still more duties and responsibilities for our already overburdened caseworkers. However, these give the workers perspective and recognition which contribute to the satisfactions of the job. Unfortunately, this is not true of all the non-casework functions which sometimes must be assumed by workers. Before we look frantically for additional workers, perhaps we should consider how the workers we have are spending their time.

From time to time, in contact with other agencies, I am amazed by the duties carried by some of the highly skilled casework staff. For instance, child welfare workers of one large metropolitan agency routinely transport children and foster parents to the clinic

whenever any kind of medical care is needed. Waits at this overcrowded clinic are lengthy, and traffic in the city is heavy, which makes it not at all unusual for a worker to devote an entire afternoon to taking children and foster mother to the clinic for some routine medical care. When it was suggested to the administrator that this transportation might be provided by taxis where buses were not practical, he was horrified at the thought of so much expense. It seems strange that he has never figured the dollar cost of a worker's afternoon, which, by comparison, would make taxi rates seem low.

Another time-consuming problem with which workers are sometimes plagued is the monthly statistical report in which the worker must somehow start this month with the same number of children with which he ended last month. This is not a difficult mathematical problem for a statistician, but can be a trial for some of us non-mathematical folk. In Montana the worker completes a statistical card on each child when he becomes a part of the case load, and submits slips to report changes in the statistical information on each child as the changes occur. This information is transferred to punch cards in the state office, and the monthly statistical reports are then compiled by office machines. Is it not good administrative practice to use machines for all operations which they can do as well as the staff, of which we are so short? In some agencies, tradition seems to have saddled child welfare workers with a variety of clerical functions, from the preparation of foster home payrolls to the compilation of Christmas lists.

Fortunately the boxes of used clothing which used to clutter our offices are fast going the way of the dodo. Aside from the psychological effects of used clothing on a recipient, there used to be a terrific loss in time for child welfare workers who tried to sort and distribute this clothing. This is a job which can be done far better by volunteers, women's clubs, church groups, etc.

Perhaps workers and agencies both need to be a little clearer in their thinking as to just what can be reasonably included in the case-

work job, and which of the things that our casework staff is now doing could be performed as well by clerical staff, volunteers, or even by mechanical devices.

Successes Are Interrelated

To many of us who tried to cope with staff shortages, it seemed that we had a vicious cycle: lack of staff resulted in high case loads and poor supervision, and the high case loads and poor supervision made it hard for us to get staff. Fortunately, our successes seem to be as interrelated as our problems. The things which we have done to increase the effectiveness of our staff have made the workers happier on their jobs, and hence they are staying longer. Cascade County, where the unit plan is most highly developed is finding it easy to recruit fully-trained child welfare staff now. This county department had a choice of six workers with Master's degrees to fill the two child welfare vacancies which they will have in June. Perhaps the key to their success lies in the comment of one of their child welfare workers who was promoted recently. Before she left, she was reminiscing a little about her experiences there and said, "I couldn't have worked in an office where I would have felt any freer, or any more independent, or any more challenged to produce the best work of which I was capable, or any more comfortable while I was doing it."

Special School Milk Program

In the October 1956 issue of *CHILD WELFARE* we reported that Congressman Lester Johnson's bill, to extend the special school milk program to agencies, institutions and services which were not previously eligible under the program, had been signed into law. Leaflets telling how to apply for the program and describing it may now be obtained. For information write your state educational agency, your dairy association, or the Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

TRAINING FOR HOUSEPARENTS

Eva Burmeister

**Institutional Consultant
The Federation of Protestant Welfare
Agencies, Inc.
New York, N. Y.**

The author points out how beneficial training (which is in its early stages in this country) can be to houseparents.

"I'm always looking for child care staff," said the director of an attractive cottage-type institution. "There has never been a time," she continued, "when I could say that I had a complete and satisfactory staff of houseparents. This is one of the most wearing and time-consuming parts of my job." Another director commented "I don't have housemothers, I have house grandmothers!"

A MOST SERIOUS problem facing institutions, and one with which they are becoming increasingly concerned each year, is that of finding and keeping able houseparents. The situation is all the more critical because the children being admitted to institutions today are so much more difficult than was the case five, even ten years ago. Nowadays, with more careful intake studies made either by the institution's own caseworker or by a worker from a referring agency, often supplemented by psychiatric and psychological work-ups, the child's needs and problems and the reasons for them, are usually fairly clear. The prescription for the treatment that the institution is expected to give the child is also clear. The director, together with the casework staff and other specialized workers, would like nothing better than to provide the child with the service he so urgently needs. The cottage into which the child is placed may be a new and modern one. The agency may have managed to provide a well-qualified administrative and casework staff, psychiatric help and other professional services as needed. The weakest link in the picture in one institution after another is, unfortunately, the child care staff.

Directors of institutions have, at times, felt almost desperate trying to keep groups even physically covered. It is hard to stand by and see what happens to children when members of the houseparents' staff are unable to cope with the job; when they leave;

when children who are already overly sensitive to change and uncertainty, experience this again, in the very institution which wants so earnestly to give them the settled, stable, consistent care they need. Institutions find too, that since they do not have the funds to attract houseparents by offering them adequate salaries for this difficult work, people sometimes take these positions out of perhaps too great emotional needs of their own.

This is an all too familiar story, and one well known to boards, directors, consultants, and agencies referring children to the institution for care. What is to be done about it? What has already been done? What can we learn from the experience of other countries?

Board Responsibility

One of the first steps is the development of a better understanding by more boards of directors of what qualifications we look for in the houseparent, the services we expect, and the strains and drains of this job. Better salaries, generally improved personnel practices and smaller groups of children for the houseparents all mean increased institutional budgets; this too, boards and budget committees must accept and make possible.

At a board meeting, the director and caseworker gave thumbnail sketches of the ten boys in the care of one housemother. Each had been referred as an individual (rather than one of a family group) with his own serious set of problems and needs. When the board had listened to the last of the ten stories and what the housemother was expected to do for each boy, the response was:

"She could not possibly take care of more than ten, in fact, she should only have eight. Does this work hold any satisfactions for her? What are they? Are we giving her enough time off?"

Training for Practicing Houseparents

There is urgent need for more training courses for houseparents already on the job, and for the preparation of those who are equipping themselves for the profession of child care in institutions. As far as courses to prepare new workers are concerned, practically nothing has been done in the United States. In a number of countries in Europe, on the other hand, such training is well-established and is being improved all the time. When we consider the help which has been given to practicing houseparents in this country, it has been along the lines of:

- 1) the in-service training which the institution itself provides,
- 2) the institutes and workshops given at various conferences of social work or organized especially for a group of houseparents in a specific locality, and
- 3) courses being offered by colleges, universities and schools of social work.

In-service training is a responsibility which every institution has for the on-going training of its total staff, which carries with it the opportunity to indoctrinate members of the staff with the institution's own particular philosophy and practice, method and procedure. In order that the training offered by the institution itself be of the greatest help to the staff, there must be good leadership, the work must be planned, regular, consistent and purposeful. The institution is fortunate in having at hand the most vibrant teaching material—the on-the-spot happenings in the daily lives of the children. For teaching and interpretation, as well as in planning treatment, there may be the discussion of a new child to be admitted, or the routine staffing of the individual child, describing his personality, his behavior, reactions and adjustment. The alert staff is always asking such questions as:

What does this mean? Why is it this way? How best can we help this child? Here is what happened yesterday; this is how we handled it; did we do the right thing? Should we have done otherwise? How can we prepare ourselves to handle it better the next time?

Often the houseparent needs help in order to better understand his or her own reactions

to certain behavior, to certain children, or to specific happenings on the part of the children. In this way, the houseparent gradually grows in deepened self-understanding, which should go hand in hand with growth in understanding and helping others.

During the past year, I had an opportunity to observe two housemothers who had had a number of years of such in-service training, and who might really be called specialized or professional housemothers.

They worked in a small group home, where twelve emotionally upset children were cared for in a large family-type dwelling in a residential neighborhood. Each morning, shortly after nine, after the children were in school, the director of the institution, the caseworker and the two housemothers sat down for an hour's discussion. One morning a week, they were joined by the psychiatric consultant. All phases of the children's life in the home, their ups and downs, their reactions, responses to happenings such as a mother's visit, or the upset when a promised visit did not materialize, were discussed. Sometimes part of the period was used for program planning. What shall we do this Sunday afternoon to arrange something special for the children who do not have visitors? Can we begin to talk about Christmas?

The housemothers had something very valuable to add as well as to take from these meetings. There were values in the discussion and consultation periods in addition to the give and take, the new body of knowledge, the enrichment of the skills and ability of the housemothers as well as of the professional members of the staff—the housemothers felt recognized and important, and the staff became a closely knit team, working in unison. The houseparents were given support and help over difficult periods with individual children and with the groups. With the deserved recognition which they received, they developed a satisfaction in their own contribution. They had a feeling that they were doing something worth while. This was a hard job, but a rewarding one. Housemothers with an intense interest in their work and with a close association with other staff members are likely to stay in the work, feeling that it represents a real career, with prestige and an opportunity to give a much needed and special kind of service to troubled children.

The housemothers of adolescent girls in another institution questioned the consulting psychiatrist about the strange reactions of the girls (whom they so wanted to be little ladies) which resulted when viewing Elvis Presley on TV. Many houseparents are having to live with the sight and sound of Elvis these days, pinned up in profusion all over bulletin boards; his voice coming endlessly from record players. The psychiatrist told them to relax, that Elvis was not a harmful influence. She then went on to explain the phenomenon of this current craze in words which were re-assuring. There is always a degree of relaxation when child care staff can share their doubts and worries and when someone else takes the final responsibility.

Courses Offered By Social Work Schools

Some interesting courses for practicing houseparents have been offered in several localities. In Chicago in the summer of 1954, under the joint sponsorship of the University of Chicago, and several other organizations, a five-week institute was held, with twenty-three houseparents participating.¹ The Chapel Hill Workshop for houseparents has recently completed its tenth annual session, at the University of North Carolina. It meets each year for five days, and in 1956 was attended by fifty houseparents from fifteen different states. The New York School of Social Work has offered a course each spring, the members meeting once a week for eight weeks. In Cleveland, since the spring semester of 1954, six sixteen-week courses have been conducted. These have been attended by over 100 houseparents from fourteen children's institutions. Usually these courses are held one each semester. They are sponsored by the Welfare Federation of Cleveland, together with Fenn College and the School of Social Work of Western Reserve University. The School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley, offers a two-semester course for houseparents.

In St. Louis, from February to May, 1956, semester-long courses were offered to houseparents by both Washington and St. Louis Universities. Sixty-eight houseparents from twenty-two different institutions were enrolled. Because this experience proved to be

¹ Described in "How to Help Houseparents Learn," by Esther K. Schour and Susanne Schulze, *Children*, July-August, 1956.

such a heartening one, a somewhat detailed account of the work might suggest the possibility of establishing more such courses in other cities. The plan for the St. Louis courses was first discussed in the Conference of Institution Superintendents. For a number of years this group had been meeting regularly, to discuss mutual problems, to visit and see innovations in one another's physical plants, and to talk over various aspects of staff and program development. After consideration within the Conference, the superintendents sounded out their child care staffs and found that they would be interested. The Conference of Superintendents, the Social Planning Council of St. Louis, and the two schools, then planned together to organize the courses.

In order to give the institutions a choice of days, one course was held on Tuesdays, the other on Thursdays. The time in each case was 9:30-11:30 in the morning, which gave the housemother a chance to see her children off to school and be home again at noon—important for those who served lunch to their children. The superintendents were most helpful in encouraging attendance—providing the necessary time, tuition, and transportation. In a number of cases houseparents were asked to report at staff meetings about their work at the schools, bringing the material considered in the classroom to the entire staff for discussion.

The arrangement of having the classes scheduled for one meeting a week was good. It allowed for time between sessions for some reading and for discussion at home of some of the content, and for some integration before the next class. In short, coming together once a week seemed more desirable than meeting daily over a concentrated period for these reasons:

On the job, the houseparent is usually physically active and, in a way, puts forth more emotional and physical effort than intellectual. Too many hours of classroom lecture and discussion, day after day, make for mental fatigue and in some cases, anxiety and resistance. It was helpful, therefore, to have enough time between sessions in order to digest and assimilate what had come before. In time, when houseparents have more intellectual tools, perhaps the emotional impact of the work can be lightened.

The participants benefited by the realization that they all had similar problems. Since many children's homes are more or less little worlds unto themselves—often physically and sometimes, therefore, professionally isolated—the houseparents were refreshed by just getting out on a working morning. There was definite prestige in attending a course at a university. The libraries of both schools not only welcomed the houseparents, but ordered books especially for the courses. Since the time and energy which a houseparent has left for reading is limited, a number of attractive pamphlets on various phases of child care were made available, as well as some related but non-professional books.² During the period of the course, one of the institutions established its first staff library; others added to their libraries books on the reading list with which the houseparents became familiar and liked. For one of the last sessions, both groups met together to view and discuss the film, *The Quiet One*.

Course Content

It was planned that the content of the courses in both schools be about the same. Not only did they begin with a consideration of the emotional reactions and the symptoms which the child evidences in the process of separation and placement, but this theme ran throughout. Every effort was made to help the groups understand all of the implications to the child of the experiences leading to placement, as well as what the actual coming to the institution might mean. The following methods of easing the trauma of separation were considered:

Good admission procedure, careful preparation of the child for coming, getting the group ready to receive him, and the important role of the housemother as she helps the new child become adjusted.

All phases of the institution routine were discussed, including the positive uses that could be made of the setting. This was reassuring to the participants. Institutions have been criticized more often than they have been praised in the past, and the house-

parents took heart from the fact that there is a great deal that is good in this sure, solid setting, if and when the various facets of the routine are used to the child's advantage. For example, when bedtime was considered it was with emphasis on the child's increased fears and anxieties at this time, and how the houseparent could best help him. Meals and food were talked about from the standpoint of the child's emotional as well as physical well-being. The importance of providing an abundance was stressed, with plenty of snacks as well as regular meals, in order to meet the very basic need for security which food represents.

The houseparents in the courses represented institutions which were making an all-out effort to strengthen their casework staffs, recognizing the importance of casework services to parents while the children were in care. The houseparent, too, has an important role in relation to the child's relatives, and this was thoroughly discussed. It is important that the houseparent understand what the parents mean to the child, even if a father or mother has neglected parental responsibilities. This is a delicate area of the work, and staff attitudes of acceptance of both the child and his parents play a significant part in the treatment plan.

Many houseparents are still not clear about what a caseworker does, or the various responsibilities of the caseworker as a member of the institutional team. The caseworker's job in relation to intake, work with parents, direct work with the child, as a help to the houseparent, was interpreted all the way through the courses. Invariably, child care staff members wanted more time from caseworkers, both those on the institution's own staff, as well as those from outside agencies. Because of large case loads and other demands on their time, caseworkers were not yet able, in many cases, to schedule the desired number of regular conferences with houseparents.

Groupings of children including size, and composition and some of the dynamic factors in the living group were discussed. As the possibilities of helping children through play

² Louise Baker's *Snips and Snails*, Ann Rose's *The Gentle House*, and McCall's *Giant Make-It-Book*.

and recreation were considered, it was hoped that the housemothers were helped to relinquish, to some degree at least, their desire for a tidy and spotless cottage or dormitory and to be more relaxed with, and encouraging of, the clutter that goes along with children. As one housemother took a visitor around her cottage, they entered a boy's room, the walls of which were covered with magazine cut-outs of brightly colored cars.

"All of this is *since* the course," the cottage mother explained. "I have learned that the child's room, or cubicle, should reflect *his* interests instead of my own taste or that of the Board Decorations Committee."

The importance of children's toys, possessions, collections, and pets was weighed against extreme order and neatness. To have everything neat and clean and in perfect order is one of the most difficult of the traditional institutional patterns for some houseparents, superintendents, and board members to relinquish. After discussing the values of paper, crayons, paints, clay and water from the standpoint of the use of these media for helping children express themselves, rather than to create works of art, students of one of the courses made a field trip to see the wonderful annual exhibit of the free, splashy and expressive drawings and paintings of children in the St. Louis public schools.

It was interesting that the demand for time, on the part of the course members, to discuss the subject of discipline was less urgent as the understanding of the reasons for children's behavior and reactions deepened. It was always apparent that those houseparents who had regular staff discussions within their own institutions and close contact with director, casework staff and psychiatric consultant, were more sure of themselves, more articulate, willing to discuss mistakes, able to change, and, in general, showed a much more mature and professional approach to their work than those who had not had this opportunity. When the reasons for children's reactions and those of adolescents' such as insolence, hostility, negativism, untruthfulness, the hard shell, and the "what do I care" attitude were seen in

the light of the child's previous experiences, and when they were understood as symptoms of emotional upset rather than as problems that must be righted, then there was less insistence for answers as to how to meet these difficulties head on.

It does seem that houseparents are better able today to accept and live with more strenuous behavior. They have had the assurance of their directors, of psychiatrists, of caseworkers, and of institute leaders, that it is not a particularly sound or realistic goal to have a group of "good" children, nor is this expected of the houseparent. It is hoped that the old-time rigidity, repression, and regimentation, still present in some institutions, will relax with the security which comes with added knowledge and enlightenment. In this connection, some soul searching was done in order to uncover, bring to light, and discuss some of the frustrations which the institutions themselves created for the children, in clinging to unreasonable practices and outmoded methods as, for example, expecting children to ride in a large bus with the thus-and-so ORPHANS HOME printed glaringly on the side for all the world (and their high school friends) to see.

Both of the instructors considered that their best classroom sessions were those devoted to the discussion of a record kept by a housemother—a weekly summary describing her work with an eight-year-old girl. Just as a teacher of casework uses case records for study and discussion, so it is helpful for those who teach houseparents to be able to use records. No American records of this kind were available or known about, so it was necessary to translate and use a Swiss record.

The housemother whose record was studied had had training for her work. She took care of a group of ten girls in a public institution in Basel, Switzerland; all members of the child care staff are graduates of one or another of the schools offering courses for group leaders, as houseparents are called, in Switzerland.

This record contained excellent live material for discussion. So often workshop leaders and other teachers of courses have had to deal in generalities and to use reading

matter and other material from related fields. This is particularly true since there is not as yet any sort of a textbook for the houseparent learning the job, or for the teacher to use as a basis for classroom discussion. For further courses and institutes, as well as for study and research within individual institutions, it is hoped that teaching records developed by houseparents themselves or by group workers in institutions will soon be made available in this country, to be added to the present collections of records for teaching purposes.

Members of the St. Louis courses asked for more records of houseparents and wished particularly for one showing work with an adolescent. The participants were pleased that there was a houseparent's record which presented the problems and efforts of the houseparent positively and professionally. While the record showed thoughtful work on the part of the housemother, particularly the strong relationship which developed between her and the little girl, there were some gaps (as there usually are in any record). In this case, the need for casework was apparent at intake. The caseworker was needed for direct work with the child, with the mother and in order to give the housemother some help and direction.

Evaluation of the Courses

"The cottage parents in my institution are realizing more and more that there is a body of knowledge behind this work—that there is a method in this specialized kind of child care," said one director.

Even with the amount of time given to the two St. Louis semester-long courses, they merely scratched the surface. It cannot be emphasized too strongly that while courses of this kind are necessary and valuable, they cannot take the place of the comprehensive training which should be available to houseparents before they take over such great responsibility. There was not enough time for discussion, nor to consider in much more detail, all of the phases of the content. There were thirty-nine registered in one of the groups which meant that it was too large to allow for discussion on the part of all of the

members. In each classroom period, over an hour was devoted to lecture, the subject matter being held close to the daily life of the houseparent. The rest of the time, the material which had been presented was talked over in relation to the participants' own work and questions. Discussion was at all times free and lively. The amount of reading done was encouraging. There was interest in recording, describing work with a child or a group, and one of the directors said of one of his housemothers, "A talent for writing was uncovered that I had not known about." Other members of the group made good beginnings, attempting to write records along the lines of the Swiss case studied. With more time and close help from someone on the institution staff, the caseworker perhaps, or casework supervisor, it would have been possible to help some of the members produce interesting records.

It is hoped that real courses of training, together with field work experience, will be made possible in this country soon, for those who wish to make a career of the important work of child care in the institution.³

EVA BURMEISTER

³ Another article on a two-year course offered by the School of Social Work in Zürich, Switzerland, by Miss Burmeister together with Miss Anni Hofer, Assistant Director of the School, is planned for the next issue of CHILD WELFARE.

READERS' FORUM

"Special Children" on TV

The experience of Minnesota agencies¹ in having their children appear on television programs is similar to that of a number of agencies which have tried it. This "special children" campaign is unique, however, in its programing which carried over six weeks. The article by Miss Fricke portrays vividly the progression from apprehension to enthusiasm through which agencies are likely to travel when, for the first time, they permit their children to be seen on television.

¹ "TV or Not TV—Minnesota Settles the Question," by Harriet Fricke, CHILD WELFARE, November 1956.

Present helpful necessa childre

Then discrim in any fears of sota ca are ma fare hi publici serve t us so commu and in

It n differen sonal. sense: televis up of s listen ments.

The guards served stated childre succes I wou merate the M An ag mit th holds custod appea

As noted whelm having the re progr adopt we ha thing which much a bro

CHIL

Presenting this experience in detail should be helpful to children's agencies which fear unnecessarily the effects of this experience on children.

There are serious dangers inherent in indiscriminate appearances of agency children in any of the communications media. The fears of caseworkers and others in the Minnesota campaign had good foundation. There are many shameful episodes in our child welfare history when children suffered through publicity at the hands of misguided efforts to serve them. However, I think this has made us so cautious that we often fail to utilize communications channels in a sensitive way and in the true interests of children.

It must be recognized that television is different from other media. It is more personal. It reaches into homes in a very full sense: It takes only an experience or two with television to learn that this industry is made up of skillful people who are quite willing to listen to an agency's problems and requirements.

The article carefully sets forth the safeguards which the Minnesota agencies observed in selecting children. These are well-stated, and the care taken in the selection of children had perhaps as much to do with the success of the series as any other single thing. I would add one precaution to the six enumerated which I am sure was observed by the Minnesota agencies, although not listed. An agency must have the legal right to permit the child to appear on television. If it holds legal custody, it possesses the right. If custody is held by the parents, children can appear only with parental consent.

As to the results of this project, it was noted that the agencies were not overwhelmed with applicants—fifty-six couples having made inquiry. This is quite similar to the response we had in Cleveland on a TV program through which we were seeking adoptive applicants for Negro children, when we had seventeen inquiries. The important thing is the number of "usable" inquiries which were turned up. In my opinion, this is much to be preferred to the typical results in a broadly-focused foster home appeal, when

hundreds respond and perhaps three to five percent prove usable after they are checked.

It is disappointing to note that in preparing the children for their participation in these programs, it was necessary to secure special funds to get especially attractive clothing and hair cuts, partly to be certain they bore no earmarks of "welfare" children. How sad that agency children can still be recognized as "welfare" children because they are provision of basic necessities of a quality different from those provided other children!

It is good to see in print the experience of agencies in the use of television as another resource in meeting the needs of children. Minnesota agencies are to be commended for their efforts.

WILLIAM D. SCHMIDT

*Executive Director
Children's Services of Cleveland, Ohio*

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Broadcast on Foster Homes

THE TAPED recording of a Roving Reporter Broadcast produced by the CBC in co-operation with the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg is now available for rental. The recording of the fifteen-minute program consists of brief informal interviews with the director of the Children's Aid Society, with several foster mothers, a foster father and a foster child. The director explains the type of work carried on by the society, and interprets the problem of neglected children and the need for foster homes. The foster home interviews cover the care of teen-agers, small children and a retarded child. The foster father explains the role of the man of the house in relation to foster children, and a teen-age girl gives a touching picture of a happy relationship with her "substitute family."

It would be quite possible to substitute local references for the Winnipeg ones at the beginning and end of the tape.

Rental charges are: \$1.00 for the first week (carrying charges included), and 50c for each succeeding week. Apply to *Publications Section, CANADIAN WELFARE COUNCIL, 55 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa 3, Canada.*

BOOK NOTES

The People Act, by Elmore M. McKee, with a foreword by Milton S. Eisenhower. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1955. 269 pp., \$3.50.

Baltimore's ten-year struggle for decent housing to replace a notorious three-quarter square mile slum was well along when Elmore McKee visited Block One, starting point of the reformation. Much had been accomplished but he was amazed to see that the brand new concrete playground was full of litter. If the people wanted recreation so badly, he asked, why didn't they keep the place clean?

His guide's answer was quick and rueful: "Because no preparations were made among them. The men just came out one day, hung up the swings and left."

By the time the housing crusade reached the last of the twenty-seven blocks in the area, things were different. Volunteers lived among the slum dwellers and recruited other volunteers from their midst to serve as leaders. They showed what could be done, but they waited until the impetus for carrying out a project came from the people. In short, they hung no swings, "unless, and until, the people shared the responsibility with them."

Here is the theme of Mr. McKee's provocative and inspiring book, *The People Act*. It is the thread that runs through each of his eleven stories of how Americans in a variety of cities, towns and counties joined voluntarily to solve their community problems. Mr. McKee became interested in the actual meaning of democracy when he served overseas as a worker in a Quaker neighborhood center in war-ravaged Germany. He decided then to seek out concrete examples of grass roots democracy upon his return home, convinced that it would be a service not only to America but to the world.

His search resulted in two radio series about thirty-nine communities, eleven of which are described in this book. The stories were hard to find, the author admits. Democracy in action is not commonplace, and each of his examples had to demonstrate both local self-determination and wide citizen

participation. The more Mr. McKee looked the more he became convinced that the

"way a thing was accomplished . . . was as important as the fact that it was accomplished at all; process was part and parcel of democratic achievement or the lack of it."

In every situation, the fight for progress took patience and an ability to withstand setbacks. Social workers played only a small part in the stories reported by Mr. McKee. The Baltimore crusade may actually be said to have begun with a thesis describing its Negro slums written in 1937 by a student for the New York School of Social Work. Group workers helped the Chinese, Japanese, Negro and white families form the Seattle Jackson Street Community Council. But for the most part, the stories deal with community organization on a non-professional level.

Nevertheless, the application to social work is unmistakable. It might take longer to get a day care center going if local mothers have to be found to serve on committees, and meetings may be more protracted (though, frankly, this would seem doubtful), but certainly the center would be more of a part of its community and more meaningful to it. When the impetus for a service comes from the recipients themselves, or at least when an effort is made to spark the impetus in them, it will be welcomed and used much more than if it had been superimposed. Certainly acceptance comes sooner, even if preliminary organization may take longer. There is a feeling of self-sufficiency, a pride in accomplishment, a sense of belonging.

This is the ultimate meaning of democracy which is founded on the faith that people can work together for the common good and that it is good for them to do so.

Nor is it belaboring the point to note that where the results were most conclusive, the leadership seemed to be rooted in the community. Projects begun in a whirlwind of excitement didn't always build the strongest. As Mr. McKee concludes, "Doing a job for people often turns out to have been doing it *against* them."

VIOLET WEINGARTEN
Journalist, Pleasantville, N. Y.

Residence Laws: Road Block to Human Welfare, National Travelers Aid Association, 425 Fourth Ave., New York 16, 1956. 31 pp., 50¢.

This pamphlet should be on the bookshelf of every agency. A symposium of seven papers given at the 1956 Forum of the National Conference of Social Work, it shows the impact of residence laws on people and welfare programs. These residence laws are statutes—varying from state to state—which prescribe how long a person must have lived in the state, or sometimes in a particular county, to be eligible for public assistance.

Four Decades of Action, 1956, 90 pp., 35¢, and **Your Children's Bureau**, 1956, 48 pp., 20¢. Both from The Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C.

These two publications, designed for professional workers and lay leaders who want more than a "nodding" acquaintance with their Government's services for children, discuss the history of the Children's Bureau and its current program of action for children. Order from Washington.

Your Child from One to Six, revised edition, Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1956., 20¢.

This pamphlet for parents has a new section on learning to get along without mother, gives the advantages of nursery school, and

tells ways in which parents can ease their child's start in school. Other new sections deal with how to prepare a child for a hospital stay and what to tell a child who asks about death. For the first time, the question of television is discussed. Order from Washington.

The 1956 Chapel Hill Workshop Reports, by the Child Welfare League of America and School of Social Work, University of North Carolina. For your copy write to University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. 37 pp., 50¢.

This is the fourth in a series of workshop reports and is written by institutional executives, caseworkers and houseparents from seventeen states. *The 1956 Reports* include notes on general sessions on "Understanding the Group," "Trends in the Houseparent's Job," "The Place of Group Work in the Institution" and "How Do We Determine Whether a Child Needs Our Home?". Workshop reports discuss "Capitalizing on Natural Leadership," "Teaching Responsibility and Appreciation to Children," and "Boy-Girl Relationships in the Adolescent and Pre-Adolescent Age" as these concerned houseparents, and "Disturbed and Retarded Children," "What Do Children Gain By Living in a Group?" and "Long-Time and Short-Time Care in Institutions," discussed by executives and caseworkers.

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL OPENINGS

Classified personnel advertisements are inserted at the rate of 10 cents per word; boxed ads at \$6.50 per inch; minimum insertion, \$2.50. Deadline for acceptance or cancellation is eighth of month prior to month of publication. Ads listing box numbers or otherwise not identifying the agency are accepted only when accompanied by statement that person presently holding the job knows that the ad is being placed.

CHILD WELFARE WORKERS (2) for family and children's section to provide casework service to unwed parents and placement of children in boarding and adoptive homes. Psychiatric consultation, Civil Service. Minimum requirements: two years' graduate social work training. Salary: \$4452-\$5568; with three years' experience, salary: \$4980-\$6228. Write details of experience to Harold E. Simmons, Superintendent, Social Service Division, 225-37th Ave., San Mateo, Calif.

CASEWORKER II in child placement agency. Service includes intensive casework with deeply troubled parents and children. Psychiatric consultation. Excellent personnel practices, Social Security, retirement, and health insurance. Requirements: Master's degree social work school and potential of being creative. Salary \$4092-\$5112. Clyde S. Pritchard, Executive Secretary, Children's Bureau of Los Angeles, 2824 Hyans St., Los Angeles 26, Calif.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES WORKER—Openings in adoptions, child-placement and protective services in public agency now being reorganized. Professional supervision; promotional opportunities. Minimum one year graduate social work plus appropriate experience required. Salary range \$397-\$438 monthly. Write County Personnel Department, 402 Civic Center, San Diego, Calif.

LOS ANGELES—Openings for two caseworkers with graduate training in expanding family and child welfare agency—multiple services including marital counseling, unmarried parents, financial assistance, child placement in foster home care and group care, psychiatric consultation. Highly qualified supervision. Standard personnel practices. Opportunities for advancement. Salary \$3660-\$5712 depending on training and experience. Write: Rev. William J. Barry, Assistant Director, Catholic Welfare Bureau, 855 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 17, Calif.

CASEWORKER III in parent-child guidance service which is a service to families with troubled boys between the ages of 6-18; psychiatric and psychological consultation available. Requirements: Master's degree social work school plus five years' experience following graduation; experience in counseling with children and parents preferred. Man. Salary \$4572-\$5832, five-step plan. Social Security and retirement, health insurance paid by agency. Milton L. Goldberg, Executive Director, Jewish Big Brothers Association, Room 366, 590 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles 4, Calif.

CASEWORKERS (3)—To complete enlargement of professional staff to 58 caseworkers and 10 supervisors. Prefer workers with two years' graduate work but will consider those with one year. Ours is an expanding public adoption agency—quantity but always quality in service to clients. Consider Southern California where the days are comfortably warm and the nights cool. Yes, there's smog but it is not too devastating—the compensations are great. Our beginning annual salary is \$4740. Annual increments bring salary to \$5868 at end of four years' employment. We have good retirement plan; adequate vacations and sick leave provisions. Apply: Director, Los Angeles County, Bureau of Adoptions, 2550 W. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles 6, Calif.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES WORKERS needed for fast-growing southern California county in adoptions or child welfare work. Excellent supervision. Benefits. Starting salary \$378; step increases to \$460. Must have one year in graduate social work school. Write County Personnel Dept., 236 Third St., San Bernardino, Calif.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA: Two openings (one in January, 1957, one in February, 1957) for professionally-trained family and child welfare caseworkers in large, multiple-function agency with professional staff of 64. Social Worker Grade I to \$4908, Social Worker Grade II to \$5424, Social Worker Grade III to \$6132. For further information and description of grade qualifications write: Executive Director, Catholic Social Service of San Francisco, 1825 Mission St., San Francisco 3, Calif.

COME TO COLORFUL COLORADO! Immediate positions available for Child Welfare Workers in CWLA and APWA agency. Salary range \$4020-\$5256. One year graduate training required. Excellent benefits, professional supervision, and unusual opportunity for development in well-rounded child welfare program. Write Personnel Officer, Denver Department of Welfare, 777 Cherokee, Denver, Colo.

CASEWORKERS (3) in private, nonsectarian, statewide, multiple-function agency. Small case loads, excellent supervision, student training program, psychiatric consultation. Openings in Hartford in newly established Protective Services Unit and in child placing. Other openings in New London and Danbury District Offices. Requirements: Master's degree social work school, some experience preferable. Salary scale \$3800-\$5300 with appointment to \$4700 depending on experience. Please write C. Rollin Zane, Executive Director, Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

MATURE CASEWORKER to head foster day care program in Hartford, Conn. Experience with day care services preferable but not necessary. Work involves family counseling, day care home studies, placements and supervision. Agency also provides foster home and adoption care, residential treatment services for emotionally disturbed children and protective services. Salary scale \$3800-\$5300 with appointment to \$4700 dependent on experience. Please write Mrs. Alice Y. Moe, District Secretary, Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5.

CASEWORKER in family-children's service agency providing family casework, specialized services to unmarried mothers, child placement and adoption. Salary comparable with good practice. Social Security and retirement. Write Miss Jane K. Dewell, Executive Secretary, Catholic Social Service Bureau, 478 Orange St., New Haven, Conn.

CHILD WELFARE WORKER in local public welfare department to carry casework services and placement in subsidized foster homes of children referred to department and to work with unmarried mothers. Requirements: Master's degree social work school, or one year in social work school plus one year social work experience. Salary \$4368-\$5200 per annum. Complete details by writing Director of Personnel, Municipal Bldg., Hartford, Conn.

CASEWORKER in multiple-function, private, nonsectarian, child welfare agency. Case load of emotionally disturbed children in institutional setting. Psychiatric consultation. Good personnel practices. Top salary limit \$5600. Minimum requirements: two years' graduate social work training. Complete details by writing Anna K. Buell, Casework Supervisor, Children's Center, 1400 Whitney Ave., New Haven, Conn.

FLORIDA—SUPERVISORS AND CASEWORKERS—Youthful, professionally-trained caseworkers, senior workers and supervisors needed in several Florida cities in statewide private agency offering adoption placement and related services, including services to unmarried mothers. Caseworker salaries \$3900-\$5000. Salaries for senior caseworkers and supervisors range from \$4500-\$6500 commensurate with experience in child placement and adoptions. Write Miss Cornelia Wallace, Associate Director, Children's Home Society of Florida, P.O. Box 5722, Jacksonville 7, Fla.

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. Caseworker in children's agency offering foster care and adoptive services. Master's degree in social work, or one year's graduate training plus one year's experience required. Salary range \$4080-\$5420. Can place within range depending on qualifications. Write: William L. Wilson, Children's Service Bureau, Inc., 440 Second Ave. North, St. Petersburg, Fla.

CASEWORKERS (2) in child welfare agency serving the 34 counties of Southern Idaho in adoptions, service to unmarried mothers, foster home and institutional services. Qualifications: Master's degree social work, experienced, must drive car and want challenging position. If you've read this ad, let's face it—you're looking and don't need to any longer. We pay. Write George Mousetis, Executive Director, Children's Home Finding and Aid Society of Idaho, 740 Warm Springs Ave., Boise, Idaho.